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Theory

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THE

THEORY OF EFFECT.

EMBRACING THE

CONTRAST OF LIGHT AND SHADE,

OF COLOUR

AND HARMONY.

BY AN ARTIST.

WITH FIFTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS BY HINCKLEY.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. W. MOORE, 193 CHESTNUT STREET.
1851.

INTRODUCTION.

The art of drawing furnishes an example which cannot be found in any other profession. There is no amusement more delightful, no accomplishment more useful, no art more elegant, or no profession more advantageous, than the practice of the Fine Arts.

Drawing brings neither regret, anxiety or fatigue of body, however much followed. Almost every other pursuit leaves a weariness when closely applied to; and to none does there belong that pleasing and enervating effect which is to be found in the practice of the heaven-born art of drawing. This art can be practised in the sick chamber without disturbing the inmate; it can be practised in the drawing room, whilst others may be reading or studying without interfering with them in the least; and independent of all this, it is one of the cheapest of the many amusements which abound. If we consider drawing in the light of an acquirement, where shall we find one more elegant or more useful? It is by a knowledge of this art that the ingenious mechanician renders his descriptions of complex machinery intelligible; it is also by this art that the traveller is enabled to render the ac-

count of his wanderings of ten-fold value, by the representation of the various objects which may be interesting; whilst the slighest sketch will often bring to mind the recollection of circumstances, which have escaped the memory in the lapse of years, and render back each long-forgotten image more vividly, than the best and completest journal.

The object of this work is to put persons in a way, by a knowledge of the theory of effect, to make their drawing correct and striking. It is not intended as a drawing book for beginners only, but for those who have attained a proficiency in the art, but are unacquainted with the reasons why their pictures are correct, only as they acquire them from their constant copying. The rules are here laid down in so simple and efficient a manner, that if those persons who have been taught to draw, without learning the theory of effect or contrast, will take the trouble of studying them, they will find their powers of composition, or, as it is generally termed "drawing out of their own heads," greatly increased.

Without understanding these rules, a man, however well he may draw, can never be called an artist. Rembrandt, by his consummate knowledge of effect, gave that magic representation of light and shade, that raised him to the highest rank in his profession, which, with his deficient skill as a draughtsman, he could never hope to obtain.

THE THEORY OF EFFECT.

The generally received meaning of the word EFFECT is, that scientific arrangement of form, of light and shade, and of colour, by which an artist, skilled in its rules, renders his representations of nature more striking, attractive and beautiful, than he, who equally clever in the mere imitation of objects, is at the same time totally ignorant of the principles of effect; for the student must not suppose, that a perfect representation of an object in nature is sufficient. No, he must also learn to know whether that object be in a good state of light and shade, colour, &c., before he makes a drawing of it; and should he never be able to see it in that state, he must supply the deficiency from his own imagination, according to those rules which every artist of merit possesses, it might be said intuitively, as there are many who, at the same time that they are capable of producing a very good effect, are also unable to say by what rules it is produced.

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Effect consists in the proper admixture and skillful union of the two opposite qualities of which it is composed, and which are called Contrast and Harmony; should either of these exceed too much the power of the other, the effect will be bad; for should contrast predominate too powerfully, it will be disturbed, scattered, crude and want repose; and should too much harmony prevail in the picture, the effect will be tame, spiritless, monotonous and poor.

By Contrast is meant opposition or difference of either form, light and shade, or colour; as for example, in regard to form: a round object forms a contrast to a square object, because the one is different or in opposition to the other, inasmuch as the shape and form of each object are in no way the same. By the same rule, light is the contrast of shade, and red of green, &c., as will be shown hereafter.

By Harmony is meant the unity, agreement or sameness, of either form, light or shade, or colour; thus a picture in which a sameness or similarity of shapes and lines, of light or of shade, and of color prevail, the whole will possess a great deal of harmony, but little effect. A picture is said to be out of harmony when the contrasts are too powerful and not properly subdued; it is sometimes, though very rarely, applied to those pictures

wherein the sentiments do not tend towards the same end.

In studying effect, the student must consider every object in nature under the three principal heads, of form, light and shade, and colour, as these constitute all the qualities of objects which can be represented by a drawing.

ON CONTRAST.

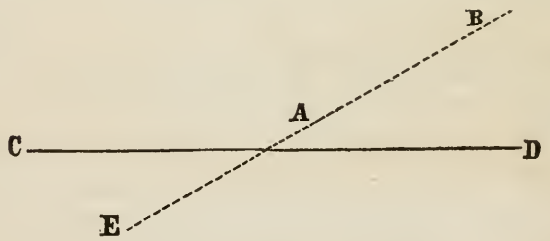
OF FORMS.

WHATEVER form is different to another is a contrast to it.

Forms are made by lines, and by light and shade. A horizontal line is contrasted most strongly by a perpendicular line.

A line is contrasted by any other line which is not parallel to it, and which, if continued, would intersect it; thus in Fig. 1., the line A B is a contrast to C D, because if continued to E, it would intersect the line C D.

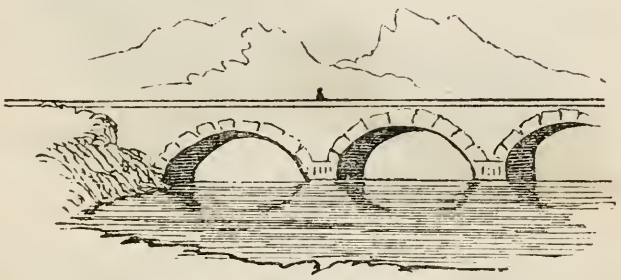
Fig. 1.



A straight line is intersected by any irregular or crooked line, as also by any curved line; in Fig. 2, the straight line of the bridge is contrasted by the

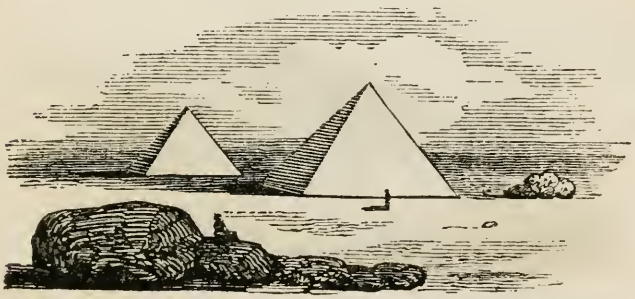
irregular line of the mountains, as well as by the curved lines of the arches.

Fig. 2.



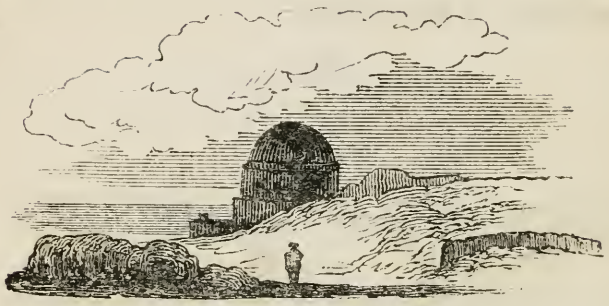
A straight line is also contrasted by an angle, as in Fig. 3, where the pyramids form a contrast to the straightness of the horizontal line.

Fig. 3.



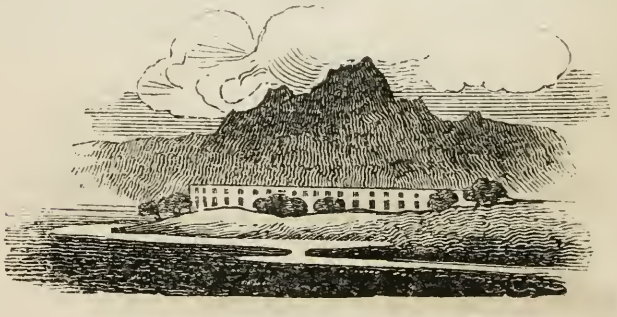
A curved line is contrasted either by a straight line, or a curved line placed in an opposite direction, as in Fig. 4 ; the dome of the building is contrasted both by its straight sides and the line of the clouds, which curve in a different direction.

Fig. 4.



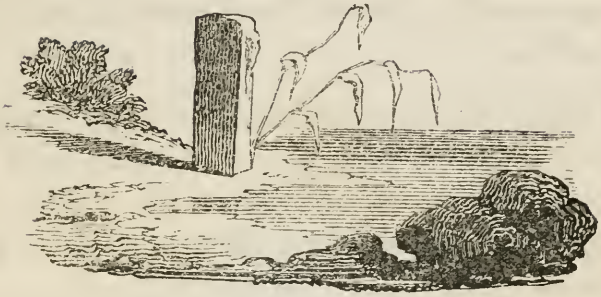
A serpentine line is best contrasted by any straight line, as in Fig. 5; the line of houses forms an opposition to the windings of the river.

Fig. 5.



A heavy form is contrasted by a light one, as the heavy form of the post in Fig. 6 is contrasted by the lightness of the weeds which grow near it.

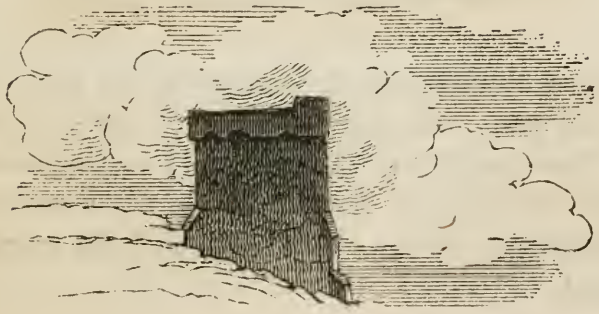
Fig. 6.



Any smooth flat surface, such as water, ice, clear sky, &c., may be contrasted by the opposition of any rough, massive form. Thus in Fig. 6, the smoothness of the water is contrasted with the rough irregular form of the lumps of stone introduced into the foreground.

Forms which are square and hard are best contrasted by those which are soft and round; as the square tower in Fig. 8 is relieved by the soft rolling clouds which it stands against.

Fig. 8.



The ragged forms of rocky mountains may also be contrasted by the softness of large rolling clouds as in Fig. 5.

Large objects are contrasted by smaller objects, as in Fig. 9; the large tree is rendered more conspicuous by the introduction of the smaller ones placed near it, and whose lightness of form gives value and weight.

Fig. 9.

Long objects may be contrasted by short ones, as in Fig. 5, the long line of buildings is opposed by the clumps of trees which come against it, whilst the straight line of the top is contrasted in all its length by the irregular line of the mountain behind.

A very low horizontal line increases the height of any upright object, as in Fig. 10, where the figure is rendered of a most gigantic size, by representing the horizontal line not much higher than the ankle.

Fig. 10.

ON THE CONTRAST OF LIGHT AND SHADE.

Light and shade, or chiaro-scuro, may be divided into *light*, which springs immediately from the object which gives the light, as the sun, moon, candle, &c.; *reflected light*, which is first received on one object, and then thrown back on to another; *shade*, which is caused by the part of the object which is in shade being in such a situation that it cannot receive the light; and *shadow*, which is the absence of light (on a part which ought otherwise to receive the light) by the intervention of an opaque object, as in Fig. 6, where a shadow is thrown on a part of the ground which would be in

light like the rest, were it not for the post which being opaque, prevents the light from reaching that part of the ground, and thus causes that absence of light which constitutes shadow.

Shadows always fall in a direction from the object which gives light, as the sun, moon, &c.

Reflected light is always thrown in a different direction to the real light, and for that reason almost always falls on the shade side of objects, by which they are rendered lighter than their shadows, as in Fig. 6, where the post is lighter than the shadow cast by it. It is for this reason that the bottom of the shade sides of objects are generally lighter than the top, as receiving the reflected light more powerfully. It is also occasioned by the contrast of the dark shadow which springs from it, as every object is rendered darker by the contrast of any lighter object, every degree of light and shade possessing only a relative value, as the same strength of colour in one part of a picture constitutes a bright light, whilst in another part it forms a deep shade.

It is also the custom in describing a picture in regard to effect, to divide all the different degrees of light and shade, into the light, the dark, and the middle tint, of which latter there is generally the most in a well painted picture, as the middle tint includes the generality of shade, as well as all the reflected lights.

ON THE NATURE OF THE CONTRAST OF LIGHT AND SHADE.

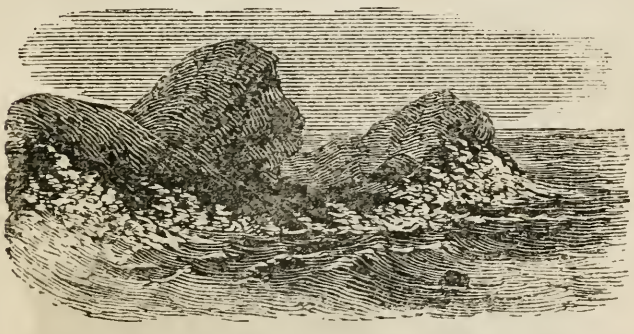
Light is the contrast of shade, and shade is the contrast of light.

A dark shade is a contrast to a lighter shade; and vice versa.

A bright light is a contrast to any other light which is not so bright.

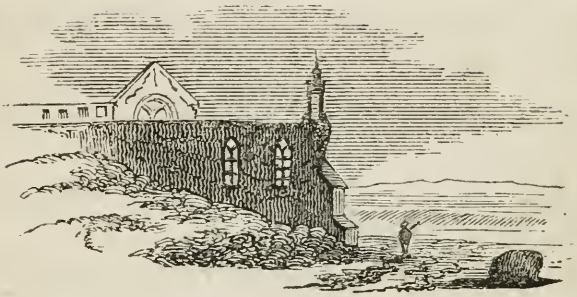
Small and agitated lights are best contrasted by large dull flat shades, as in Fig. 11, where the flittering light of the flying spray at the bottom of the rocks is well contrasted by the sombre stillness of the dark rocks against which it beats.

Fig. 11.



A mass of buildings which are in shade may be relieved and contrasted by perforations which admit of light, as in Fig. 12, where the dark side of the ruined abbey is relieved, and rendered less heavy by the windows through which is seen the light of the evening sky.

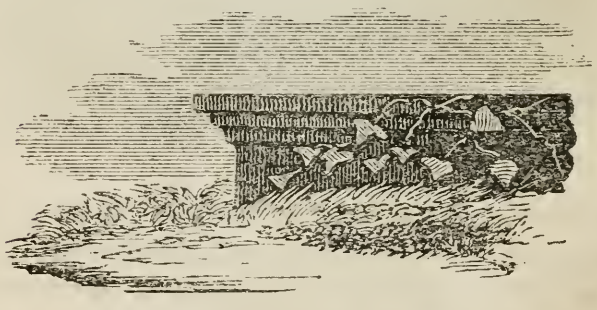
Fig. 12.



The strongest contrast to a light is by making that light the only light in the picture, all the rest being in shade.

A square flat shade is best contrasted by any small irregular lights, as in Fig. 13; the squareness of the tomb is contrasted by the light leaves of the bramble which hang over it.

Fig. 13.



Every light or shade may be contrasted by a light or shade of a different form, according to rules given for contrast of form.

ON THE CONTRAST OF COLOUR.

THERE are three primitive colours, with which all colours may be made; these colours are yellow, blue, and red, each of which, if perfect, is entirely free from any mixture of either of the above colours.

Now, as all these colours, if perfect, are entirely free from any mixture of another colour, so each colour forms a contrast to the other two; as for example, a perfect red, having no mixture of either blue or yellow in it, is by this reason a contrast to either of those colours, and so on in regard to the rest. These contrasts are called simple contrasts; but as each primitive colour has two others to contrast it, so these two contrasting colours, when mixed together form a double contrast. For example, red is contrasted both by blue and yellow; blue and yellow mixed together form a green, therefore green is the strongest contrast to red. The following is a table of the primitive colours, the simple contrasts, and the compound contrasts.

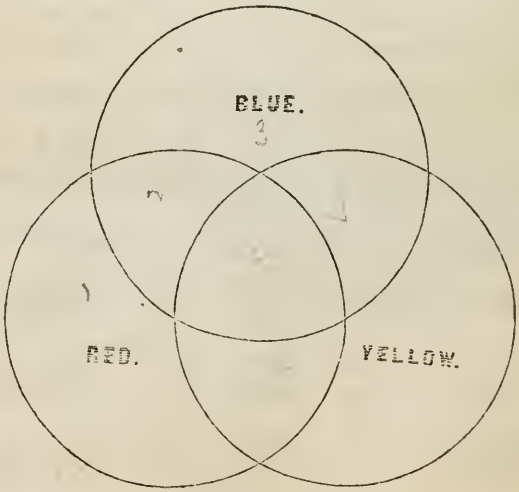
Primitive Colours.	Simple Contrasts.	Compound Contrasts.
Red.	Yellow, Blue.	Green.
Yellow.	Blue, Red.	Purple.
Blue.	Red, Yellow,	Orange.

Thus the simple contrasts to red, are yellow and blue, which mixed together, form green, the double contrast of red.

The simple contrasts of yellow, are blue and red, which mixed together, form purple, the strongest contrast of yellow.

The simple contrasts of blue, are red and yellow, which mixed together, form orange, the strongest contrast to blue.

The following scheme will exemplify the three simple colours, yellow, blue, and red, and the three compounds, green, purple, and orange, which form the contrasts to the simple colours, whilst the union of the three simple colours, producing grey, is seen in the centre.



By drawing three circles, and colouring them as marked on the opposite page, the student will get the correct idea of these contrasts.

We will observe, that all mixtures of the three primitive colours we shall call greys; dividing them into red greys, green greys, yellow greys, purple greys, blue greys, and orange greys, according as they approach nearest to the different simple colours and compounds.

ON THE CONTRAST OF GREYS.

The gentlest contrast of green greys, are yellow greys, and blue greys; the next, orange greys, and purple greys; and the strongest contrasts are red greys, and vice versa.

The gentlest contrasts of orange greys, are red greys, and yellow greys; next, purple greys, and green greys; and the strongest are blue greys, and vice versa.

The gentlest contrasts of purple greys, are blue greys, and red greys; the next, orange greys, and green greys; and the strongest, are yellow greys.

Every grey is contrasted by a primitive colour, and in a greater or less degree, according as that grey possesses in its mixture a less or greater degree of the colour it is meant to contrast. For example, a red forms a strong contrast to a green grey, whilst it forms a very feeble contrast to a red grey, with which it is said to harmonize.

It may be observed here, that it is impossible to

draw the exact line which separates contrast from harmony, as it entirely depends on circumstances; the value of forms, of light, and shade, and of colours, being entirely relative.

Every colour may be contrasted by another colour of a different form. In this case, however, the contrast is not in the colour, but in the form. The same may be said of the contrast of a dark and light tint of the same colour, the contrast being then a contrast of light and shade, and not of colour.

In considering the three primitive colours, yellow may be considered as light, red as middle tint, and blue as dark; again, yellow is a warm colour, *red neither warm nor cold*, and blue is a cold colour. Of all the colours, simple and compound, orange is the warmest, and blue the coldest; by which it will be seen, that all warm colours are contrasts to cold colours.

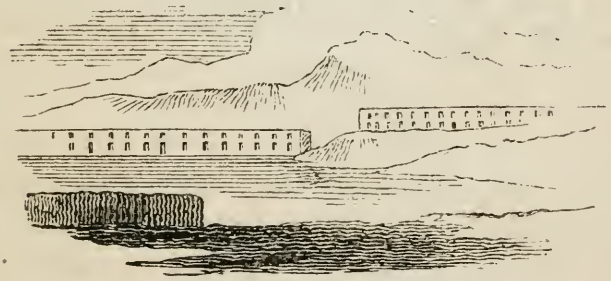
By an attentive perusal of the foregoing pages, at the same time carefully studying the examples which have been given, the student will be enabled in a few hours to acquire a perfect knowledge of the different contrasts of form, of light and shade, and of colour. Indeed, the study of *contrast* requires nothing more than to comprehend thoroughly the meaning of the word, as the differences of light and shade, and of forms are self-evident, as are also the differences of colours, after the student has learnt that there are only three primitive colours, each of which differs from the other two.

ON HARMONY.

Harmony consists in a sameness or similarity of forms of light and shade, and of colour. Thus, in regard to forms:

Every line is in harmony with another when it runs parallel with it, whether it be a straight or a curved line; thus, in the annexed figure, there exists a perfect harmony in the lines of the two mountains, which follow one another, and in the straight lines of the two rows of houses and square lumps of stone in the foreground, and the straight lines of the water.

Fig. 14.



From this example, the student will readily perceive what is meant by harmony of forms; in the same way, the harmony of light and shade exists

in a picture, where the lights or shades are of the same degree of strength throughout.

With regard to the harmony of colours, the same simplicity exists and consists in a sameness of tints, which pervade the whole of a picture. Thus, when a drawing or painting exhibits a general tone of green, red, yellow, grey, &c., it possesses a great deal of harmony, for a colour bears the greatest harmony towards itself, as red to red, after which those colours which have the greatest mixture of red in them, such as orange, red greys, &c.

The above explanations, though short, will be sufficient to show the meaning of harmony; the proper union of which, with the rules of contrast, constitute what is generally termed effect; which is more fully treated on, in the comprehensive extracts from Sir Joshua Reynolds, in another portion of the book.

ON EFFECT.

In speaking of the contrast of forms, I have introduced many objects as contrasting others, when the opposition was not perfect, but, on the contrary, more or less broken by a mixture of harmony; for instance, I have said, that "any line, which if continued, would cross another line, is a contrast to that line;" so it is: but unless that line cross the other at right angles, the contrast is not perfect, but inclines more or less towards harmony, in proportion as the line approximates towards a parallel situation; indeed, all the examples of contrast which I have given, are so mingled with a certain proportion of harmony, that they may all of them be introduced without any fear of rendering the picture disturbed. In making a drawing, the most powerful contrast, as well of light and shade and colour, as of form, ought to exist in the principal object, whilst all the other parts are kept subdued, so that the eye may rest undisturbed on what forms the subject of the picture, without being called away by the superior brilliancy or force of some other object of less importance. The student must recollect that two principal objects of equal force or size, or of the same colour, ought never to exist

in a picture, but that one object, whatever it may be, ought to be the principal, and all the rest subservient to it.

Much, however, will depend on the nature of the subject of which the drawing is composed; in portraits, the effect is often thrown on the face, every other part being made as little prominent as possible, whilst, on the contrary, in landscape, many of the objects approach nearer to that of the principal one, not only in colour, but also in force.

In considering the effect of colours, particular regard must be had to the kind of weather which is supposed to be represented, if the subject be a landscape; and in other subjects, what the nature of the object is which gives the light, whether it be the sun, fire, or candle, and whether the light be reflected or direct, and if reflected, whether from a warm coloured object, or cold coloured object, as it is on the nature of the light that that general hue which gives harmony to a picture depends. As an example, suppose the subject is a landscape, in which the setting sun, amid red and yellow clouds, is the object which gives the light:—in this case, the light side of every object will possess a warm yellow tint, and should any thing be represented, of which the light side is cold, a want of harmony would be the immediate consequence. Notwithstanding this, many, indeed I might say all of the best artists, who have ever painted moon-

light, have generally introduced a fire into some part of their pictures, the red light of which is so different from the cold beams of the moon, that I always think that that part of the picture which derives its light from the fire, looks like the piece of another painting cut out and stuck against the moonlight.

In representing a landscape lighted by the rising sun, every object ought to be represented cooler than when the sun is setting, as the light of the former is generally more clear and cold than that of the latter.

With regard to the colouring either of landscapes or other subjects, the greatest contrast ought to be observed in the principal object; thus, if the subject be some particular building, it may be represented with a bright yellow light upon it, whilst dark clouds of a cold blue grey thrown behind it, will render it more conspicuous than other parts of the picture where the contrasts are less forcible.

When the colouring of any part of a drawing looks dirty through want of clearness, some artificial object of vivid colours placed against it will destroy the dinginess which would otherwise exist; for instance, should the colouring of a field look dark, dirty, and want transparency, a figure placed against it, dressed in a white jacket, striped with

lake, and yellow or blue coloured trowsers, will render it less opaque.

From the above observations, the student will find that effect depends on contrast, more or less subdued by harmony, and that a knowledge of effect depends entirely on a thorough knowledge of the different contrasts of form, light, and shade, and colour; all, therefore, that the student will have to attend to in studying the principles of effect, is to obtain a perfect knowledge of contrast, a thing in itself the most easy that can possibly be, as the very word may be said to explain its principles. The arrangement or subduing of contrast will be easily learnt, (to a certain degree,) by the rules given in this work.

HINTS FROM VARIOUS ARTISTS UPON COLOUR AND EFFECT.

WATER AND ITS REFLECTIONS.*

Water is not involved in the same obscurity with atmosphere and colour, and the laws which regulate its appearances may be soon learnt; and those appearances are all, or nearly so, with which the painter has to busy himself.

Its three principal states are perfect transparency, perfect opacity, and a state between the two—semi-transparency.

1. In the first, it is capable of receiving perfect reflections, and incapable of receiving any shadows.

2. In the middle state it is capable of receiving both reflections and shadows, but neither of them perfect—that is, but at half their natural force.

3. In the last it is capable of receiving perfect shadows, and incapable of receiving any reflections.

I feel that to go through a number of other intermediate states would be only to state that which is obvious, and to waste time; therefore, speaking of

* "Letters on Landscape, by J. B. Pyne," one of the most celebrated of English Landscape Painters.

the power to receive reflections and shadows, it can do perfectly but one at one time and in one state.

Where it loses the power of receiving the one, it gains the power of receiving the other; the loss and gain bearing an exact ratio. In this manner water, under a loss of one-fourth of its transparency, loses one-fourth of its power to reflect: receives a shadow of one-fourth, and a reflection of three-fourths, of their natural force; and so on in perfectly just proportions.

Water, to be perfectly clear, must be perfectly colourless (not that it at all follows that perfectly colourless water is perfectly clear, as it is perfectly colourless when suffused with chalk;) and, though some waters holding colouring matter in solution may be of an admirable clearness, they are, notwithstanding, deprived of part of their clearness, and work accordingly some serious changes upon the reflections received in them.

Semi-opaque water, that is, water holding in suffusion—not solution—any light opaque matter, such as chalk or light coloured mud, presents some appearances quite distinct from anything that may occur under any circumstances to water holding transparent colouring matter in solution only.

Water under this last state—transparent and coloured—is little, if at all, affected by sunlight; whether it be under a full blaze of light, or, on the

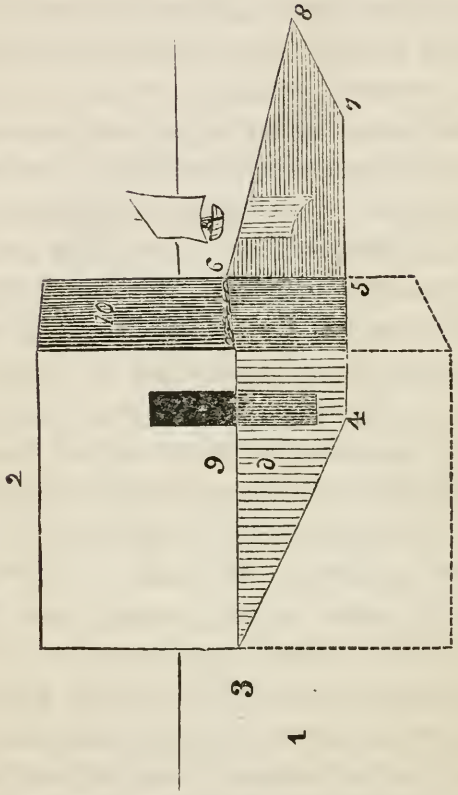
contrary, under dense shadow, it continues to reflect objects with the same precision in both cases.

I am at present speaking of water in a perfectly undisturbed state, for a sharp windripple on its surface would of course at once alter the case, and render it capable of receiving shadows nearly as sharp and distinct as would a turnpike road.

A river, charged with this light colouriug matter up to the point of semi-opacity, comes, when in shadow, under the state marked 3; and possesses its power of receiving both reflections and shadows up to fifty per cent. of their actual force. But when under full and intense sunlight—and this circumstance is one which in an eminent degree proves the opaciating influenee of light—it is at once thrown into, or very nearly into, the state marked 2, and necessarily refuses any reflections.

If the banks, hills, or other objects forming one side of the river, were to throw their shadows on its surface, half-reflections would be received up to the limits of the line of shadow, and no further; and should any shadows extend further than any objects which would, under other circumstances, reflect, the shadows themselves would be distinctly marked.

A slight diagram will save me some writing, and perhaps explain more fully what I mean.



Suppose 1, a piece of water under the last-described circumstances, suffused with light colouring matter up to the point of semi-opacity; and 2 an object rising out of it, with the sun before you to the left. As far as the shadow of this object extends on the water, it will be semi-transparent, and receive modified, or what may be very properly called half reflections of anything falling

within the optical conditions regulating reflections. The dotted line indicates the general form of that reflection which would occur in clear water; 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 6, the general form of the shadow left upon the water by the object 2; 3, 4, 5, 6, that portion of it only which would be occupied by its reflection; and 5, 7, 8, 6, that part of the shadow which, falling beyond the reflecting limits of the object, becomes a flat and even piece of shadow. Suppose the boat to the right to have a thin white sail, which, under the circumstance of the sun shining through it, would become a brilliant light; this again would be reflected within the limits of the shadow.

Now, having settled the linear part of the subject, it will be easy to explain the other circumstances which govern the appearances of the shadows and reflections of such objects. They are three. The amount of opacity of the water, its colour, and its depth.

Charge your mind, firstly, with these generals, affecting opaque reflecting mediums, whether water or anything else, liquid or solid.

If the object reflecting be darker than the local depth of the water, the reflection must be, and always is, lighter than the object; and if the object be lighter than the water, the reflection will be darker.

If the object be more transparent than the water,

which is frequently the case, the reflection will be more opaque than the object, and, *vice versa*, when the object is more opaque than the water, the reflection necessarily becomes more transparent than the object. You can, I am quite certain, go through the coloured conditions of opaque waters yourself, but two minutes' writing will explain it. When, therefore, the reflecting object happens to be more coloured than the local character of the water, the reflection is less coloured than the object; and when the water possesses more colour than the object, the reflection becomes charged with the colour of the water itself. And occasionally all three conditions operate on the reflection of an object at the same time.

Thus a reflection may be either more transparent, dark, and coloured, or more opaque, light, and colourless, than the object causing it.

This is without reference to the many motions and consequent forms incident to an element so liquid and exquisitely mobile as water, and which, without entirely upsetting the foregoing laws of still water, modify them in a great many ways, and to an extent not perhaps to be dreamt of by a person who, for the first time in his life, sits down —under the shadow of an old wall—before a cow-pond, an elder tree, and a piece of broken paling, with a piece of Watman's paper in a quarter imperial folio on his knees! But to the point again.

I will carry out for you this little diagram somewhat further before quitting the water.

We must fix upon its depth—I mean not its "profond," but its amount of darkness. Let it be for simplicity's sake, exactly middle tint. Its colour? Let that be, I was about saying, drab; that is unpleasant; stone colour, that is dull; mud, that is indefinite, as are the other two: let it be the colour of cork; that is of a pleasant character as regards colour, and its associations are pleasant also—it is not to be forgotten as the others are; it is the colour of the Severn, the Avon, the Tiber, and many other warm-coloured muddy rivers, which have more beauties in them than are generally allowed by the lovers of clear water, and have been described by the poets as golden, amber-coloured, yellow, mellow, roseate, &c., as—one may suppose—the rhyme may require.

Let the side of the object marked 9 be a pure white; so that, notwithstanding its being in shade, its *apparent* local depth may be still much lighter than the *actual* local depth of the water. This would be the case in nature, if the sky at your back were white, instead of clear blue or dark clouds. Locally white itself, and lighted by the bright and colourless sky behind, this face of the object would be very light although in shadow, and tolerably free from colour. Its reflection, on the contrary, received in water of the colour of cork, and of the

depth of middle tint, would be of a light cork colour, or, of what may be more specifically named, a quarter tint of cork colour. Nothing in shadow can be perfectly opaque; but the face 9, itself locally white and strongly reflected on from clouds of its own colour, though not quite opaque, would be so nearly so as to present a very wide distinction between the opacity of itself and the semi-transparency of the water. The character, then, of this part of the reflection as regards transparency, would be somewhat more than a quarter transparency, or somewhat less than a three-quarter opacity. The reflection here then is, in broad terms, darker, more coloured, more transparent than its object.

The aperture to the right of 9, let us suppose, for the sake of explicit and easy terms, to be black and perfectly transparent. The reflection under these circumstances—that is, full shade and perfect transparency, received in half shade and semi-transparency—would be three-quarter transparent, or a quarter opaque. As regards depth it would be dark middle tint; and as regards colour it would be, like face 9, more coloured than its object.

The reflection of face 9 differed from its object in being darker, more transparent, and more coloured. This last reflection differs from its object in being lighter, less transparent, and more coloured.

Let the end 10 be deep vermilion in colour, so that, allowing for reflection from the same sky which lighted the face 9, its depth should be just middle tint. The reflection of this part as regards depth, will not be distinguishable from its object; for middle tint of any colour, received in middle tint of any other colour, will experience no other alteration in depth.

As regards the colour of this part, the conditions are quite changed from those which regulate the face 9 and its aperture. The *object* in this case is much more coloured than the *water*. The reflection in this instance will be much less coloured than the surface reflected, and in just the same proportion as the colour of the water may be of a character less positive and active, than the red of the object reflected. I think I said before, that the remainder of the shadow, which projects itself to the right beyond the limits of reflection, will be a perfectly flat piece of shadow.

A person noticing for the first time the effect of coloured water—whether transparent or opaque—will be very likely to run away with the impression that the whole of the reflections are tinged to one certain amount by the colour of the water—that is, that they receive a certain per centage of such colour, let the objects reflected be ever so varied. This, however, is not the case, and it very frequently happens that, not until after some failures

in representing such effects, and going back to nature frequently for fresh authority in close studies, the discovery is made that various colours are variously effected—tinged by—variously coloured waters. A great deal of unnecessary confusion thus disturbs one's progress to truthful representation, all to be the more lamented when the truth happens to be a beauty as well; and, as regards water, its truths and constantly changing characteristics have in them a greater proportion of beauties out of any given number of effects or states, than any else I know of in nature, sky not excepted.

I will give you an instance as regards myself, and that will perhaps reconcile you to what I feel myself to be somewhat *petite* and wearisome in this particularizing on so small a scale of incident, and at the same time prove how necessary it is to well know nature before you can go to her, palatte on thumb, with anything like a chance of success in any but a very slight hand-gallop style of art.

Early in my painting life, I sat down to a piece of green coloured nearly transparent water, tranquil enough to receive perfect reflections as to form, and coloured enough to at once strike me forcibly with the beauty of its chromatic phenomena, in the great difference between the colour of the objects themselves, and their reflections.

With this imperfect impression of the partial or efficient reflectability of red, I fell across a piece

of reddish golden coloured water, in which the reds were reflected perfectly, as where the orange and yellow-coloured objects; upon which the laws regulating coloured reflections, in both transparent and turbid coloured waters, opened upon me at once.

They operate in this manner;—all waters, of whatsoever colour they may be, reflect those colours most perfectly which are first identical, and next those which most closely affinitize with the colour of the water itself; and least perfectly, those colours which are diametrically opposed to the colour of the water.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS ON LANDSCAPES, BY J. B. PYNE.

REFLECTIONS.

The quantities of any series of objects seen reflected upon still water, are always precisely the same quantities of the objects themselves, as might be seen from a point removed as far below the surface as the actual point of sight is elevated above such surface.

We must first of all bear in mind distinctly, that reflections cannot ever be arbitrary. They may, under some instances of extreme complication, become every thing but unaccountable.

The front object in a scene, will of course be first reflected; but it does not follow that another which is much higher must be reflected also, for it will depend upon the distance at which it is situated beyond the one in front.

The higher you raise your station, the more you see of the distant and higher object, and the less of their reflections; and the lower and farther off you place yourself, the less you see of the higher and distant objects, and the more of their reflections.

It is often the case with painters, after having

sketched or studied a scene from nature at a time when the water was not in a state to receive reflections, that they somewhat alter the treatment when at home, and add the reflections; and it too frequently happens that the whole scene—if not considered so—is treated as so much surface on one plain. Indeed, it would seem that the occupation of a painter's life being to create pictures, the whole scene, sky included, is treated as a picture also, and reflected as such from the water-line downwards; than which it is impossible for anything to be more erroneous.

There is, in fact, much danger and mischief in going to nature too unprepared. There is an absolute necessity that that part of the subject upon which we are now in communication should be thoroughly understood, if not gone through mathematically, in order that one may not be taken unawares by some of the palpable common places of natural appearances.

Without a continued discipline of this nature, there are many things constantly turning up in the course of a season's study for which one is not prepared readily, and on the instant, to account; and this necessarily occasions much hesitation, pottering about, and undecided and often erroneous painting.

Amongst these things nothing is more puzzling,

at first sight, than some of the incidents attending reflections.

For instance, some objects which appear on the landscape dark are reflected as light, and others which relieve light on the landscape have a dark reflection. Some colours are most essentially modified, and occasionally quite altered in reflection; and some objects, even at the water's edge, which present a broad face to the view, have no reflection; while others, of which you can only see an edge of point, have their whole length in perfect reflection.

The rule follows thus:—all surfaces which run in a right line with any possible angle of incidence, cannot be reflected, although seen. And all surfaces running in a right line with any possible angle of accidence cannot be seen, although their whole length may be reflected."

COLOUR.

Colour presents more of debateable ground than any other subject that may be entered on. It has been, of all others, the least satisfactorily handled by the writers upon art. The reason of this is, that as regards the arts, powerful chromatic feeling and organization, as in the case of Titian, have appeared in their maturity, while the science of chromatics until the last few years, has lingered in its infancy; and in its present state, it still remains

a sealed book as regards the requirements of the painter, and as presenting a site of well-defined powers, productive of certain, definite, and varied chromatic expressions. Pictures, and the different scales of different masters have been analyzed with the utmost minuteness; but the result of such labour up to the present time, has been attended with no better success, than that of children who have taken to pieces their parents' watches. Analysis has gone on producing nothing but wreck, and no synthesis has grown out of the confusion. When, indeed, we think of the requisite varied power and qualifications of the mind, capable of throwing all the necessary light on this subject, which is wanted by the painter in search of high intentionality and expression, we may not wonder that it has not yet been done; and, though I intend exposing to you as plainly as possible the views by which (though not invariably) my practice has been guided, I must at the same time warn you against the expectation of that complete system, I so much regret the want of, and to produce which, would require in one individual the several united powers of the greatest colourists, and the greatest natural and moral philosophers, and all blended into one lucid, and eloquent, and logical intelligence by a power of writing that falls to the share of but few.

While you are, on the other hand, cautioned against a two implicit reliance, (not from any

doubts of my own, but from the circumstances merely of my own views being somewhat opposed to those of others,) I must, on the other hand, and to save time, be allowed to advance them without qualification, or a circumlocution that would merely convey but an equivocal impression of my possible modesty.

Any picture, to convey an idea of, or administer to, any one particular sentiment or expression, should be of some one particular definable tone or colour, which should as it were, and in defiance of the other colours within the work, pervade its whole surface.

If you are afraid of two bold a speculation, and would shrink from attempting anything so *outre* as a blue picture, there are numerous other tones which have already ingratiated themselves in our affections, such as pearly, golden, amber, silvery, &c., &c. Let us discuss in imagination the properties of a golden tone.

It may be well, that some principal mass or object in this work be orange, which may intensify in yellow, and be surrounded by citrons and russets, before breaking away into any of the contrasts. The yellow may be extended in lesser degrees over the light part of the picture, and be allowed to culminate at some part at the nearest possible approach to white; but white in its ultimate purity should be strictly avoided; it should be

subordinated to yellow or golden. The following colours cannot harmonize with golden or yellow, and should never be admitted, at any rate in any quantity: white and black, purple, blue and red. The two first are negative, the next positive oppositions, and the last two perfect strangers to yellow; under which circumstances harmony must, I have always felt, be out of the question when it shall be attempted to combine them in a work of the tone in question. A pure blue sky would, therefore, be inadmissible. The blue in this, as well as any other object, should not be broken down with red, which would produce an opposite, but with yellow or orange, yellow in preference.

The greatest amount of opposition admissible in a picture of this tone would be olive, graduating through citron-olive, and russet-olive; of which colours, varying between their lightest and darkest extremes, and leaning occasionally towards one or the other of their components—there may be found an infinite variety, sufficient for all purposes, provided they be kept pure and distinct at some one point of their occurrence.

To a person in the habit of using the more violent and crude oppositions, this may appear to present a very limited range of colours; but I must impress upon your consideration whether harmony, discarding this liberal limit, can by any possibility be obtained by opposition without subordination.

It cannot, at least, be obtained in any other system of things in nature; and as all nature is in different degrees analogous, colour cannot be expected to insulate itself so completely from all other nature, of which it is itself a component, so as in every particular to have consequences intrinsically, and exclusively its own.

EXTRACTS FROM DISCOURSES ON ART.

BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

When the artist is once enabled to express himself with some degree of correctness, he must then endeavour to collect subjects for expression; to amass a stock of ideas, to be combined and varied as occasion may require. He is now in the second period of study, in which his business is to learn all that has been known and done before his own time. Having hitherto received instructions from a particular master, he is now to consider Art as his master. He must extend his capacity to more sublime and general instructions. Those perfections which lie scattered among various masters, are now united in one general idea, which is henceforth to regulate his taste, and enlarge his imagination. With a variety of models thus before him, he will avoid that narrowness and poverty of conception which attends a bigoted admiration of a simple master, and will cease to follow any favourite, where he ceases to excel.

A student unacquainted with the attempts of former adventures, is always apt to overrate his own abilities; to mistake the most trifling excursions for discoveries of moment, and every coast

new to him, for a new-found country. If by chance he passes beyond his usual limits, he congratulates his own arrival at those regions which they who have steered a better course have long left behind them.

The productions of such minds are seldom distinguished by an air of originality; they are anticipated in their happiest efforts; and if they are found to differ in anything from their predecessors, it is only in irregular sallies and trifling conceits. The more extensive, therefore, your acquaintance is with the works of those who have excelled, the more extensive will be your powers of invention; and what may appear still more like a paradox, the more original will be your conceptions."

COPYING.

I CONSIDER general copying as a delusive kind of industry; the student satisfies himself with the appearance of doing something; he falls into the dangerous habit of imitating without selecting, and of labouring without any determinate object; as it requires no effort of the mind, he sleeps over his work; and those powers of invention and composition which ought particularly to be called out, and put in action, lie torpid, and lose their energy for want of exercise.

How incapable those are of producing anything of their own, who have spent much of their

time in making finished copies, is well known to all who are at all conversant with art.

The great use in copying, if it be at all useful, should seem to be in learning to colour; yet even colouring will never be perfectly attained by servilely copying the mode before you. An eye critically nice, can only be formed by observing well-coloured pictures with attention; and by close inspection, and minute examination, you will discover, at last, the manner of handling the artifices of contrast, glazing, and other expedients, by which good colourists have raised the value of their tints, and by which nature has been so happily imitated.

I must inform you, however, that old pictures deservedly celebrated for their colouring, are often so changed by dirt and varnish, that we ought not to wonder if they do not appear equal to their reputation in the eyes of inexperienced painters, or young students. An artist, whose judgment is matured by long observation, considers rather what the picture once was, than what it is at present. He has, by habit, acquired a power of seeing the brilliancy of tints through the cloud by which it is obscured. An exact imitation, therefore, of those pictures, is likely to fill the student's mind with false opinions, and send him back a colourist of his own formation, with ideas equally remote from nature and from art, from the genuine practice of the masters, and the real appearances of things.

Following these rules, and using these precautions, when you have clearly and distinctly learned in what good colouring consists, you cannot do better than have recourse to nature herself, who is always at hand, and in comparison of whose true splendour the best coloured pictures are but faint and feeble.

However, as the practice of copying is not entirely to be excluded, since the mechanical practice of painting is learned in some measure by it, let those choice parts only be selected, which have recommended the work to notice. If its excellence consists in its general effect, it would be proper to make slight sketches of the machinery and general management of the picture. Those sketches should be kept always by you for the regulation of your style. Instead of copying the touches of those great masters, copy only their conceptions. Instead of treading in their footsteps, endeavour only to keep the same road. Labour to invent on their general principles and way of thinking. Possess yourself with their spirit. Consider with yourself how a Michael Angelo, or a Raffaelle would have treated this subject, and work yourself into the belief that your picture is to be seen and criticised by them when completed. Even an attempt of this kind will rouse your powers.

We all must have experienced how lazily, and consequently how ineffectually instruction is re-

ceived, when forced upon the mind by others. Few have been taught to any purpose, who have not been their own teachers. We prefer those instructions which we have given ourselves, from our affection to the instructor; and they are more effectual, from being received into the mind at the very time when it is most open and eager to receive them.

STYLE.

Style in painting, which is a branch of the art more immediately necessary to the young student, is the same as in writing, a power over materials, whether words or colours, by which conceptions or sentiments are conveyed. In this Luidovico Caracci (I mean in his best works) appears to me to approach the nearest to perfection. His unaffected breadth of light and shadow, the simplicity of colouring, which, holding its proper rank, does not draw aside the least part of the attention from the subject, and the solemn effect of that twilight which seems diffused over his pictures, appear to me to correspond to grave and dignified subjects, better than the more artificial brilliancy of sunshine, which enlightens the pictures of Titian; though Tintoret thought that Titian's colouring was the model of perfection, and would correspond even with the sublime of Michael Angelo; and that if Angelo had coloured like Titian, or Titian de-

signed like Angelo, the world would once have had a perfect painter.

In painting, as in other arts, there are many teachers who profess to show the nearest way to excellence; and many expedients have been invented, by which the toil of study might be saved. But let no man be seduced to idleness by specious promises. Excellence is never granted to man, but as the reward of labour. It argues, indeed, no small strength of mind to persevere in habits of industry, without the pleasure of perceiving those advances; which, like the hand of a clock, whilst they make hourly approaches to their point, yet proceed so slowly as to escape observation. A facility of drawing, like that of playing upon a musical instrument, cannot be acquired but by an infinite number of acts. I need not, therefore, enforce by many words the necessity of continual application; nor tell you that the port-crayon ought to be forever in your hands. Various methods will occur to you by which this power may be acquired.

There is one precept, however, in which I shall only be opposed by the vain, the ignorant, and the idle. I am not afraid that I shall repeat it too often. You must have no dependence on your own genius. If you have great talents, industry will improve them; if you have but moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiency.

Nothing is denied to well-directed labour; nothing is to be obtained without it. Not to enter into metaphysical discussions on the nature or essence of genius, I will venture to assert, that assiduity, unabated by difficulty and a disposition eagerly directed to the object of its pursuit, will produce effects similar to those which some call the result of natural powers.

Though a man cannot at all times, and in all places, paint or draw, yet the mind can prepare itself by laying in proper materials, at all times, and in all places. Both Livy and Plutarch, in describing Philopoemen, one of the ablest generals of antiquity, have given us a striking picture of a mind always intent on its profession, and by assiduity, obtaining those excellencies which some all their lives vainly expect from nature.

I cannot help imagining, that I see a promising young painter, equally vigilant, whether at home or abroad, in the streets, or in the fields. Every object which presents itself, is to him a lesson. He regards all nature with a view to his profession; and combines her beauties, or corrects her defects. He examines the countenance of men under the influence of passion; and often catches the most pleasing hints from subjects of turbulence or deformity. Even bad pictures themselves supply him with useful documents; and, as Leonarda de Vinci has observed, he improves upon the fanciful images that

are sometimes seen in the fire, or are accidentally sketched upon a discoloured wall.

The artist who has his mind thus filled with ideas, and his hand made expert by practice, works with ease and readiness: whilst he would have you believe that he is waiting for the inspirations of genius, he is in reality at a loss how to begin.

DETAIL AND MINUTE FINISH.

The detail of particulars, which does not assist the expression of the main characteristics, is worse than useless, it is mischievous, as it dissipates the attention and draws it from the principal point. It may be remarked, that the impression which is left on our mind, even of things which are familiar to us, is seldom more than their general effect; beyond which we do not look in recognising such objects. To express this in painting, is to express what is congenial and natural to the mind of man, and what gives him by reflection his own mode of conceiving. The other pre-supposes *nicety* and *research*, which are only the business of the curious and attentive, and therefore does not speak to the general sense of the whole species; in which common, and, as I may so call it, mother tongue, every thing grand and comprehensive must be uttered.

I do not mean to prescribe what degree of attention ought to be paid to the minute facts; that, it is hard to settle. We are sure that it is expressing the general effect of the whole, which alone can give to objects their true and touching character; and wherever this is observed, whatever else may be neglected, we acknowledge the hand of a mas-

ter. We may even go further, and observe, that where the general effect only is presented to us by a skillful hand, it appears to express the object represented in a more lively manner, than the minutest resemblance would do.

The properties of all objects, as far as a painter is concerned with them, are, the outline or drawing, the colour, and the light and shade. The drawing gives the form, the colour its visible quality, and the light and shade its solidity.

Excellence in any one of these parts of art will never be acquired by an artist, unless he has the habit of looking upon objects at large, and observing the effect which they have on the eye when it is dilated. It is by this that we obtain the ruling characteristic, and that we learn to imitate it by short and dextrous methods. I do not mean by dexterity, a trick or mechanical habit, formed by guess, and established by custom; but that science, which, by a profound knowledge of ends and means, discovers the shortest and surest way to its own purpose.

If we examine with a critical view the manner of those painters whom we consider as patterns, we shall find that their great fame does not proceed from their works being more highly finished than those of other artists, or from a more minute attention to details; but from that enlarged comprehension which sees the whole object at once,

and that energy of art which gives its characteristic effect by adequate expression.

Raffaelle and Titian are two names which stand the highest in our art; one for drawing, and the other for painting. The most considerable and the most esteemed works of Raffaelle are the Cartoons, and his Fresco works in the Vatican; those, as we all know, are far from being minutely finished: his principal care and attention seems to have been fixed upon the adjustment of the whole, whether it was the general composition, or the composition of each individual figure; for every figure may be said to be a lesser whole, though in regard to the general work to which it belongs, it is but a part; the same may be said of the head, of the hands and feet.

Though he possessed this art of seeing and comprehending the whole, as far as form is concerned, he did not exert the same faculty in regard to the general effect, which is presented to the eye by colour, and light and shade. Of this, the deficiency of his oil pictures, where this excellence is more expected than in fresco, is a sufficient proof.

It is to Titian we must turn our eyes to find excellence with regard to colour, and light and shade, in the highest degree. He was both the first and the greatest master of this art. By a few strokes he knew how to mark the general image and character of whatever object he attempted; and pro-

duced by this a line, a truer representation than his Giovanni Bellino, or any of his predecessors, who finished every hair. His great care was to express the general colour, to preserve the masses of light and shade, and to give by opposition the idea of that solidity which is inseparable from natural objects; when those are preserved, though the work should possess no other merit, it will have in a proper place its complete effect; but where any of these are wanting, however minutely laboured the picture may be in the detail, the whole will have a false and even an unfinished appearance, at whatever distance, or in whatever light it can be shown.

It is vain to attend to the variation of tints, if in that attention the general hue of flesh is lost; or to finish even so minutely the parts, if the masses are not observed, or the whole not well put together.

Raffaelle and Titian seem to have looked at nature for different purposes; they both had the power of extending their view to the whole; but one looked only for the general effect as produced by form, the other as produced by colour.

We cannot entirely refuse to Titian the merit of attending to the general form of his object, as well as colour; but his deficiency lay, a deficiency at least when he is compared with Raffaelle, in not possessing the power like him, of correcting the form of his model by any general idea of beauty in his own mind. Of this, his St. Sebastian is a par-

ticular instance. This figure appears to be a most exact representation both of the form and colour of the model, which he then happened to have before him; it has all the force of nature, and the colouring is flesh itself; but unluckily, the model was of a bad form, especially the legs. Titian has with as much care preserved these defects, as he has imitated the beauty and brilliancy of the colouring. In his colouring, he was large and general, as in his design he was minute and partial: in the one he was a genius, in the other not much above a copier. I do not, however, speak now of all his pictures; instances enough may be produced in his works, where those observations on his defects could not, with any propriety be applied; but it is in the manner or language, as it may be called, in which Titian and others of that school express themselves, that their chief excellence lies. This manner is in reality, in painting, what language is in poetry. We are all sensible how differently the imagination is effected by the same sentiment expressed in different words, and how mean or how grand the same object appears when presented to us by different painters, whether it is the human figure, an animal, or even inanimate objects; there is nothing, however uncompromising in appearance, but may be raised into dignity, convey sentiment, and produce emotion in the hands of a painter of genius. What was said of

Virgil, that he threw even the dung about the ground with an air of dignity, may be applied to Titian: whatever be touched, however naturally mean, and habitually familiar, by a kind of magic he invested with grandeur and importance.

I must here observe, that I am not recommending a neglect of the detail; indeed it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prescribe *certain* bounds, and tell how far, or when it is to be observed or neglected; much must, at last, be left to the taste and judgment of the artist. I am well aware that a judicious detail will sometimes give the force of truth to the work, and consequently interest the spectator. I only wish to impress on your minds the true distinction between essential and subordinate powers; and to show what qualities in the art claim your *chief* attention, and what may, with the least injury to your reputation be neglected. Something, perhaps, always must be neglected; the lesser ought then to give way to the greater; and since every work can have but a limited time allotted to it, (for even supposing a whole life to be employed about one picture, it is still limited,) it appears more reasonable to employ that time to the best advantage, in contriving various methods of composing the work,—in trying different effect of light and shadow,—and employing the labor of correction in heightening by a judicious adjustment of the parts, the effects of the whole,—than that

the time should be taken up in minutely finishing those parts.

But there is another kind of high finishing, which may safely be condemned, as it seems to counteract its own purpose; that is, when the artist, to avoid that hardness which proceeds from the outline cutting against the ground, softens and blends the colours to excess: this is what the ignorant call high finishing, but which tends to destroy the brilliancy of colour, and the true effect of representation; which consists very much in preserving the same proportion of sharpness and bluntness that is found in natural objects. This extreme softening, instead of producing the effect of softness, gives the appearance of ivory, or some other hard substance, highly polished.

The portraits of Cornelius Jansen appear to have this defect, and consequently want that suppleness which is the characteristic of flesh; whereas, in the works of Vandyck, we find that true mixture of softness and hardness perfectly observed. The same defect may be found in the manner of Vanderwerf, in opposition to that of Teniers; and such also, we may add, is the manner of Raffaelle, in his oil pictures, in comparison with that of Titian.

The name which Raffaelle has so justly maintained as the first of painters, we may venture to say was not acquired by this laborious attention.

His apology may be made by saying that it was the manner of his country; but if he had expressed his ideas with the facility and eloquence, as it may be called, of Titian, his works would certainly not have been less excellent; and that praise which ages and nations have poured out upon him, for possessing genius in the higher attainments of art, would have been extended to them all.

Those who are not conversant in works of art, are often surprised at the high value set by connoisseurs on drawings which appear careless, and in every respect unfinished. But they are truly valuable; and their value arises from this, that they give the idea of a whole, and this whole is often expressed by a dexterous facility which indicates the the true power of a painter, even though roughly exerted: whether it consists in the general composition, or the general form of each figure, or the turn of the attitude which bestows grace and elegance.

All this we may see fully exemplified in the very skilful drawings of Parmegiano and Corregio. On whatever account we value these drawings, it is certainly not for high finishing, or a minute attention to particulars.

Excellence in every part, and in every province of our art, from the highest style of history, down to the resemblance of still life, will depend on this

power of extending the attention at once to the whole, without which the greatest diligence is vain.

I wish you to bear in mind, that when I speak of a whole, I do not mean simply a *whole*, as belonging to composition, but a *whole* with respect to the general style of colouring; a *whole* with regard to the light and shade; a *whole* of every thing which may separately become the main object of a painter.

I remember a landscape painter in Rome, who was known by the name of STUDIO, from his patience in high finishing, in which he thought the whole excellence of art consisted; so that he once endeavored, as he said, to represent every individual leaf on a tree. This picture I never saw; but I am very sure that an artist, who looked only at the general character of the species, the order of the branches, and the masses of the foliage, would, in a few minutes, produce a more true resemblance of trees, than this painter in as many months.

A landscape painter certainly ought to study, anatomically, (if I may use the expression,) all the objects which he paints; but when he is to turn his studies to use, his skill, as a man of genius, will be displayed in showing the general effect, preserving the same degree of hardness and softness which the objects have in nature; for he applies himself to the imagination, not to the curiosity, and works not for the virtuoso, or the naturalist, but for the

common observer of life and nature. Where he knows his subject, he will know not only what to describe, but what to omit; and this skill in leaving out is, in all things, a great part of knowledge and wisdom.

The same excellence of manner which TITIAN displayed in history or portrait painting, is equally conspicuous in his landscapes, whether they are professedly such, or serve only as back grounds. One of the most eminent of this latter kind is to be found in the picture of St. Pietro Martire. The large trees, which are here introduced, are plainly distinguished from each other by the different manner with which the branches shoot from their trunks, as well as by their different foliage; and the weeds in the foreground are varied in the same manner, just as much as variety requires, and no more. When Algarotti, speaking of this picture, praises it for the minute discrimination of the leaves and plants, even, as he says, to excite the admiration of a botanist, his intention was, undoubtedly, to give praise, even at the expense of truth; for he must have known that this is not the character of the picture. But connoisseurs will always find, in pictures, what they think they ought to find: he was not aware that he was giving a description injurious to the reputation of TITIAN.

Such accounts may be very hurtful to young artists, who never have had an opportunity of seeing

the work described; and they may possibly conclude that this great artist acquired the name of the divine TITIAN from his eminent attention to such trifling circumstances, which, in reality, would not raise him above the level of the most ordinary painter.

We may extend these observations even to what seems to have but a single, and that an individual object, the excellence of portrait painting; and, we may add, even the likeness, the character and countenance, as I have observed in another place, depend more upon the general effect produced by the peculiarities, or minute discrimination of parts. The chief attention of the artist is, therefore, employed in planting the features in their proper places, which so much contributes to giving the effect and true impression of the whole. The very peculiarities may be reduced to classes and general descriptions; and there are, therefore, large ideas to be found even in this contracted subject. He may afterwards labour single features to what degree he thinks proper, but let him not forget, continually, to examine, whether in finishing the parts he is not destroying the general effect.

It is certainly a thing to be wished, that all excellence were applied to illustrate subjects that are interesting and worthy of being commemorated; whereas, of half the pictures that are in the world, the subject can be valued only as an occasion which set the artist to work; and yet our high estimation

of such pictures, without considering, or perhaps without knowing the subject, shows how much our attention is engaged by the art alone.

Perhaps nothing that we can say will so clearly show the advantage and excellence of this faculty, as that it confers the character of genius on works that pretend to no other merit, in which is neither expression, character, or dignity, and where none are interested in the subject. We cannot refuse the character of genius to the marriage of Paoli Veronese, without opposing the general sense of mankind, (great authentics have called it the triumph of painting,) or to the altar of St. Augustine, at Antwerp, by Rubens, which equally deserves that title; and for the same reason, neither of those pictures have any interesting story to support them. Paoli Veronese is only a representation of a great concourse of people at a dinner; and the subject of Rubens, if it may be called a subject where nothing is doing, is an assembly of various saints, that lived in different ages. The whole excellence of those pictures consists in mechanical dexterity, working, however, under the influence of that comprehensive faculty which I have so often mentioned.

It is by this, and this alone, that the mechanical power is ennobled, and raised much above its natural rank. And it appears to me, that with propriety it acquires this character; as an instance of that superiority with which mind predominates over

matter, by contracting into one whole what nature has made multifarious.

The great advantage of this idea of a whole is, that a greater quantity of truth may be said to be contained and expressed in a few lines or touches, than in the most laborious furnishing of the parts where this is not regarded. It is upon this foundation that it stands; and the justness of the observation would be confirmed by the ignorant in art, if it were possible to take their opinions unseduced by some false notion of what they imagine they ought to see in a picture. As it is an art, they think they ought to be pleased in proportion as they see that art ostentatiously displayed; they will, from this supposition, prefer neatness, high finishing, and gaudy colouring, to the truth, simplicity, and unity of nature. Perhaps, too, the totally ignorant beholder, like the ignorant artist, cannot comprehend a whole, nor even what it means. But if false notions do not anticipate their perceptions, they who are capable of observation, and who, pretending to no skill, look only straight forward, will praise and condemn in proportion as the painter has succeeded in the effect of the whole. Here general satisfaction, or general dislike, though perhaps despised by the painter, as proceeding from the ignorance of the principles of art, may yet help to regulate his conduct, and bring back his attention to that which ought to be his principal object, and from which he

has deviated for the sake of minuter beauties. An instance of this right judgment I once saw in a child, in going through a gallery where there were many portraits of the last ages, which, though neatly put out of hand, were very ill put together. The child paid no attention to the neat finishing or naturalness of any bit of drapery, but appeared to observe only the ungracefulness of the persons represented, and put herself in the posture of every figure which she saw in a forced and awkward attitude. The censure of nature, uninformed, fastened upon the greatest fault that could be in a picture, because it related to the whole character and management of the whole.

I should be sorry, if what has been said should be understood to have any tendency to encourage that carelessness which leaves work in an unfinished state. I commend nothing for the want of exactness; I mean to point out that kind of exactness which is the best, and which is alone truly to be so esteemed.

So far is my disquisition from giving countenance to idleness, that there is nothing in our art which enforces such continual exertion and circumspection, as an attention to the general effect of the whole. It requires much study and much practice; it requires the painter's entire mind; whereas the parts may be finishing by nice touches, while his mind is engaged on other matters; he may even

hear a play or novel read without much disturbance. The artist who flatters his own indolence, will continually find himself evading this active exertion, and applying his thoughts to the care and laziness of highly finishing the parts; producing, at last, what Cowley calls "laborious effects of idleness."

No work can be too much finished, provided the diligence employed be directed to its proper object; but I have observed that an excessive labour in the detail has, nine times in ten, been pernicious to the general effect, even when it has been the labour of great masters. It indicates a bad choice, which is an ill setting out in any undertaking.

To give a right direction to your industry has been my principal purpose. It is this which, I am confident, often makes the difference between two students of equal capacities, and of equal industry. While the one is employing his labour on minute objects of little consequence, the other is acquiring the art, and perfecting the habit, of seeing nature in an extensive view, in its proper proportions, and its due subordination of parts.

The same extension of mind which gives the excellence of genius to the theory and mechanical practice of the art, will direct him likewise in the method of study, and give him the superiority over those who narrowly follow a more confined track of partial imitation.

Whoever, in order to finish his education, should

travel in Italy, and spend his whole time there only in copying pictures, and measuring statues or buildings, (though these things are not to be neglected,) would return with little improvement. He that imitates the Iliad, says Dr. Young, is not imitating Homer. It is not by laying up in the memory the particular details of any of the great works of art, that a man becomes a great artist; if he stops without making himself master of the general principles on which these works are conducted. If he even hopes to rival those whom he admires, he must consider their works as the means of teaching him the true art of seeing nature. When this is acquired, he then may be said to have appropriated their powers, or at least the foundation of their powers, to himself; the rest must depend on his own industry and application. The great business of study is, to form a *mind*, adapted and adequate to all times and all occasions; to which all nature is there laid open, and which may be said to possess the key of her inexhaustible riches.

INVENTION AND DESIGN.

The observations to which I formerly wished, and now desire to point your attention, relate not to errors which are committed by those who have no claim to merit, but to those inadvertencies into which men of parts only can fall, by the over-rating, or the abuse of some real, though subordinate, excellence. The errors last alluded to are those of backward, timid characters; what I shall now speak of belong to another class—to those artists who are distinguished for the readiness and facility of their invention. It is undoubtedly a splendid and desirable accomplishment to be able to design, instantaneously, any given subject. It is an excellence that I believe every artist would wish to possess; but, unluckily, the manner in which this dexterity is acquired, habituates the mind to be contented with first thoughts, without choice or selection. The judgment, after it has been long passive, by degrees loses its power of becoming active, when exertion is necessary.

Whoever, therefore, has this talent, must, in some measure, undo what he has had the habit of doing, or, at least, give a new turn to his mind: great works, which are to live and stand the criticism of posterity, are not performed at a heat; a propor-

tionable time is required for deliberation and circumspection. I remember when I was at Rome, looking at the Fighting Gladiator, in company with an eminent sculptor, and I expressed my admiration of the skill with which the whole is composed, and the minute attention of the artist to the change of every muscle in that momentary exertion of strength. He was of opinion that a work so perfect required nearly the whole life of man to perform.

I believe, if we look around us, we shall find that, in the sister art of poetry, what has been soon done has been as soon forgotten. The judgment and practice of a great poet, on this occasion, is worthy attention. Metastasia, who has so much and justly distinguished himself throughout Europe, at his outset was an *Improvisatore*, or extempore poet,—a description of men not uncommon in Italy. It is not long since he was asked by a friend, if he did not think the custom of inventing and reciting *extempore*, which he practised when a boy, in his character of an *Improvisatore*, might not be considered as a happy beginning of his education; he thought it, on the contrary, a disadvantage to him. He said that he had acquired by that habit a carelessness and incorrectness, which it cost him much trouble to overcome, and to substitute in the place of it a totally different habit, that of thinking with selec-

tion, and of expressing himself with correctness and precision.

However extraordinary it may appear, it is certainly true, that the inventions of the *Pittori improvisatore*, as they may be called, have, notwithstanding the common boast of their authors, that all is spun from their own brain, very rarely anything that has in the least the air of originality: their compositions are generally common-place, uninteresting, without character or expression; like those flowery speeches that we sometimes hear, which impress no new ideas on the mind.

I would not be thought, however, by what has been said, to oppose the use, the advantage, the necessity there is, of a painter's being readily able to express his ideas by sketching. The further he can carry such designs, the better. The evil to be apprehended is his resting there, and not correcting them afterwards from nature, or taking the trouble to look about him for whatever assistance the works of others will afford him.

We are not to suppose, that when a painter sits down to deliberate on any work, he has all his knowledge to seek; he must not only be able to draw, *extempore*, the human figure, in every variety of action, but he must be acquainted, likewise, with the general principles of composition, and possess a habit of foreseeing, while he is composing, the effect of the masses of light and shadow that

will attend such a disposition. His mind is entirely occupied by his attention to the whole. It is a subsequent consideration to determine the attitude and expression of individual figures. It is in this period of his work that I would recommend to every artist to look over his port-folio, or pocket-book, in which he has treasured up all the happy inventions, all the extraordinary and expressive attitudes that he has met with in the course of his studies; not only for the sake of borrowing from those studies whatever may be applicable to his own work, but likewise on account of the great advantage he will receive by bringing the ideas of great artists more distinctly before his mind, which will teach him to invent other figures in a similar style.

I know there are many artists of great fame, who appear never to have looked out of themselves, and who, probably, would think it derogatory to their character to be supposed to borrow from any other painter. But when we recollect, and compare the works of such men with those who took to their assistance the inventions of others, we shall be convinced of the great advantage of this latter practice.

The two men most eminent for readiness of invention, that occur to me, are Luca Gurdano and La Fage; one in painting, and the other in drawing.

To such extraordinary powers as were possessed by both of those artists, we cannot refuse the cha-

racter of genius; at the same time it must be acknowledged, that it was that kind of mechanic genius which operates without much assistance of the head. In all their works, which are (as might be expected) very numerous, we may look in vain for anything that can be said to be original and striking; and yet, according to the ordinary ideas of originality, they have as good pretensions as most painters; for they borrowed very little from others, and still less will any artist, that can distinguish between excellence and insipidity, ever borrow from them.

To those men, and all such, let us oppose the practice of the first of painters. I suppose we shall all agree that no man ever possessed a greater power of invention, and stood less in need of foreign assistance, than RAFFAELLE; and yet, when he was designing one of his greatest, as well as latest works, the Cartoons, it is very apparent that he had the studies which he had made from MASACCIO before him. Two noble figures of St. Paul, which he found there, he adopted in his own work; one of them he took for St. Paul preaching at Athens, and the other for the same saint, when chastising the socerer Elymas. Another figure in the same work, whose head is sunk in his breast, with his eyes shut, appearing deeply wrapt up in thought, was introduced amongst the listeners to the preaching of St. Paul. The most material alteration that

is made in those two figures of St. Paul, is the addition of the left hands, which are seen in the original. It is a rule that Raffaelle observed, (and indeed ought never to be dispensed with,) in a principal figure, to show both hands; that it should never be a question what is become of the other hand. For the sacrifice at Lystra, he took the whole ceremony, much as it stands, in an ancient basso-relievo, and published in the Admiranda.

I have given examples from those pictures only of Raffaelle which we have among us, though many other instances might be produced of this great painter's not disdaining assistance: indeed, his known wealth was so great, that he might borrow where he pleased without loss of credit.

It may be remarked that this work of Masaccio, from which he has borrowed so freely, was a public work, and at no farther distance from Rome than Florence; so that, if he had considered it a disgraceful theft, he was sure to be detected; but he was well satisfied that his character for invention would be little affected by such a discovery; nor is it, except in the opinion of those who are ignorant of the manner in which great works are built.

Those who steal from mere poverty; who have nothing of their own, cannot exist a minute without making such depredations; who are so poor that they have no place in which they can even deposit what

they have taken; to men of this description nothing can be said.

Raffaelle, as appears from what has been said, had carefully studied the works of Masaccio; and, indeed, there was no other, if we except Michael Angelo, (whom he likewise imitated,) so worthy of his attention; and, though his manner was dry and hard, his compositions formal, and not enough diversified, according to the custom of painters in that early period, yet his works possess that grandeur and simplicity which accompany, and even sometimes proceed from, regularity and harshness of manner. We must consider the barbarous state of the arts before his time, when skill in drawing was so little understood, that the best of the painters could not even foreshorten the foot, but every figure appeared to stand upon his toes; and what served for drapery, had, from the hardness and smallness of the folds, too much the appearance of cords clinging round the body. He first introduced large drapery, flowing in an easy and natural manner; indeed, he appears to be the first who discovered the path that leads to every excellence to which the art afterwards arrived, and may, therefore, be justly considered as one of the great fathers of modern art.

Though I have been led on to a longer digression respecting this great painter, than I intended, yet I cannot avoid mentioning another excellence

which he possessed in a very eminent degree; he was as much distinguished among his contemporaries for diligence and industry, as he was for the natural faculties of his mind. We are told that his whole attention was absorbed in the pursuit of his art, and that he acquired the name of Masaccio, from his total disregard to his dress, his person, and all the common concerns of life. He is indeed a signal instance of what well directed diligence will do in a short time; he lived but twenty-seven years, yet, in that short space, carried the art so far beyond what it had before reached, that he appears to stand alone as a model for his successors. Vassari gives a long catalogue of painters and sculptors, who formed their taste, and learned their art, by studying his works; among those he names Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Pietro Perugino, Raffaelle, Bartolomeo, Andrea del Sarto, Il Rosso, and Piereno del Vaga.

The habit of contemplating and brooding over the ideas of great geniuses, till you find yourself warmed by the contact, is the true method of forming an artist-like mind; it is impossible, in the presence of those great men, to think or invent in a mean manner; a state of mind is acquired that receives those ideas only which relish of grandeur and simplicity.

Besides the general advantage of forming the taste by such an intercourse, there is another of a

particular kind, which was suggested to me by the practice of Raffaelle, when imitating the work of which I have been speaking. The figure of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, is taken from the Felix of Masaccio, though one is a front figure, and the other seen in profile; the action is likewise somewhat changed, but it is plain Raffaelle had that figure in his mind. There is a circumstance, indeed, which I mention by the by, which marks it very particularly—Sergius Paulus wears a crown of laurel; this is hardly reconcilable to strict propriety, and the *costume*, of which Raffaelle was in general a good observer; but he found it so in Masaccio, and he did not bestow so much pains in disguise as to change it. It appears to me to be an excellent practice, thus to suppose the figures which you wish to adopt in the works of those great painters to be statutes, and to give, as Raffaelle has here given, another view, taking care to preserve all the spirit and grace you find in the original.

I should hope, from what has been lately said, that it is not necessary to guard myself against any supposition of recommending an entire dependence upon former masters; I do not desire that you should get other people to do your business, or to think for you; I only wish you to consult with, to call in, as counsellors, men the most distinguished for their knowledge and experience, the result of which counsel must ultimately depend on yourself. Such

conduct, in the commerce of life, has never been considered as disgraceful, or in any respect to imply intellectual imbecility; it is a sign, rather, of the true wisdom, which feels individual imperfection, and is conscious to itself how much collective observation is necessary to fill the immense extent, and to comprehend the infinite variety of nature. I recommend neither self-dependence, nor plagiarism. I advise you only to take that assistance which every human being wants, and which, as appears from the examples that have been given, the greatest painters have not disdained to accept. Let me add, that the diligence required in the search, and the exertion subsequent in accommodating those ideas to your own purpose, is a business which idleness will not, and ignorance cannot perform. But in order more distinctly to explain what kind of borrowing I mean, when I recommend so anxiously the study of the works of great masters, let us for a minute return again to Raffaelle, consider his method of practice, and endeavour to imitate him, in his manner of imitating others.

The two figures of St. Paul, which I lately mentioned, are so nobly conceived by Masaccio, that perhaps it was not in the power of Raffaelle himself to raise and improve them, nor has he attempted it; but he has had the address to change, in some measure, without diminishing the grandeur of their character; he has substituted, in the place of a se-

rene composed dignity, that animated expression which was necessary to the more active employment he has assigned them.

In the same manner he has given more animation to the figure of Sergius Paulus, and to that which is introduced in the picture of St. Paul preaching, of which little more than hints are given by Masaccio, which Raffaelle has finished. The closing the eyes of this figure, which in Masaccio might be easily mistaken for sleeping, is not in the least ambiguous in the cartoon; his eyes, indeed, are closed, but they are closed with such vehemence, that the agitation of a mind, *perplexed in the extreme*, is seen at the first glance; but what is most extraordinary, and I think particularly to be admired, is, that the same idea is continued through the whole figure, even to the drapery, which is so closely muffled about him, that even his hands are not seen: by this happy correspondence between the expression of the countenance, and the disposition of the parts, the figure appears to think, from head to foot. Men of superior talents alone are capable of thus using and adapting other men's minds to their own purposes, or are able to make out and finish what was only in the original a hint or imperfect conception. A readiness in taking such hints, which escape the dull and ignorant, makes, in my opinion, no inconsiderable part of that faculty of the mind which is called genius.

It often happens that hints may be taken and employed in a situation totally different from that in which they were originally employed. There is a figure of a Bacchante leaning backward, her head thrown quite behind her, which seems to be a favourite invention, as it is so frequently repeated in basso-relievos, cameos, and intaglios; it is intended to express an enthusiastic frantic kind of joy. This figure Baccio Bandenelli, in a drawing that I have of that master, of the Descent from the Cross, has adopted, (and he knew very well what was worth borrowing,) for one of the Mary's to express frantic agony of grief. It is curious to observe, and it is certainly true, that the extremes of contrary passions are, with very little variation, expressed by the same action.

If I were to recommend method in any part of the study of a painter, it would be in regard to invention; that young students should not presume to think themselves qualified to invent, till they are acquainted with those stores of invention the world already possesses, and had by that means accumulated sufficient materials for the mind to work with. It would certainly be no improper method of forming the mind of a young artist, to begin with such exercises as the Italians call a *pasticcio* composition of the different excellencies which are dispersed in all other works of the same kind. It is not supposed that he is to stop here, but that he is to ac-

quire by this means the art of selecting, first, what is truly excellent in art, and then what is still more excellent in nature; a task which, without this previous study, he will be but ill qualified to perform.

The doctrine which is here advanced, is acknowledged to be new, and to many may appear strange. But I only demand for it the reception of a stranger; a favourable and attentive consideration, without that entire confidence which might be claimed under authoritative recommendation.

After you have taken a figure, or any idea of a figure, from any of those great painters, there is another operation still remaining, which I hold to be indispensibly necessary; that is, never to neglect finishing from nature every part of the work. What is taken from a model, though the first idea may have been suggested by another, you have a just right to consider as your own property. And here I cannot avoid mentioning a circumstance in placing the model, though to some it may appear trifling. It is better to possess the model, with the attitude you require, than to place him with your own hands: by this means it happens often that the model puts himself in an action superior to your own imagination. It is a great matter to be in the way of accident, and to be watchful and ready to take advantage of it; besides, when you fix the position of a model, there is danger in putting him in an attitude into which no man would naturally fall. This ex-

tends even to drapery. We must be cautious in touching and altering a fold of the stuff which serves as a model, for fear of giving it, inadvertently, a forced form; and it is, perhaps, better to take the chance of another casual throw, than to alter the position in which it was at first accidentally cast.

Remerandt, in order to take the advantage of accident, appears often to have used the pallet-knife to lay his colours on the canvass, instead of the pencil. Whether it is the knife, or any other instrument, it suffices, if it is something that does not follow exactly the will. Accident, in the hands of an artist who knows how to take the advantage of its hints, will often produce bold and capricious beauties of handling and facility, such as he would not have thought of, or ventured, with his pencil, under the regular restraint of his hand. However, this is fit only in occasions where no correctness of form is required, such as clouds, stumps of trees, rocks, or broken ground. Works produced in an accidental manner will have the same free unrestrained air as the works of nature, whose particular combinations seem to depend upon accident.

I again repeat, you are never to lose sight of nature; the instant you do, you are all abroad, at the mercy of every gust of fashion, without knowing or seeing the point to which you ought to steer. Whatever trips you make, you must still have na-

ture in your eye. Let me recommend to you not to have too great dependence on your practice or memory, however strong those impressions may have been which are there deposited. These are for ever wearing out, and will be at last obliterated, unless they are continually refreshed and repaired.

It is not uncommon to meet with artists who, from a long neglect of cultivating this necessary intimacy with nature, do not even know her when they see her; she appearing a stranger to them, from their being so long habituated to their own representation of her. I have heard painters acknowledge, though in that acknowledgment no degradation of themselves was intended, that they could do better without nature than with her; or, as they expressed it themselves, *that it only put them out.* A painter, with such ideas and such habits, is indeed, in a most helpless state. *The art of seeing nature*, or, in other words, the art of using models, is, in reality, the great object, the point to which all our studies are directed. As for the power of being able to do tolerably well, from practice alone, let it be valued according to its worth. But I do not see in what manner it can be sufficient for the production of correct, excellent, and finished pictures. Works deserving this character never were produced, nor ever will arise, from memory alone; and I will venture to say, that an artist who brings

to his work a mind tolerably furnished with the general principles of art, and a taste formed upon the works of good artists, in short who knows in what excellence consists, will, with the assistance of models, which we will likewise suppose he has learnt the art of using, be an overmatch for the greatest painter that ever lived, who should be debarred such advantages.

ANATOMICAL PROPORTIONS OF THE HUMAN FIGURE.

Du Piles has, in his note in this passage, given the measures of a human body, as taken by Fresnoy from the statues of the ancients, which are here transcribed :—

"The ancients have commonly allowed eight heads to their figures, though some of them have but seven; but we ordinarily divide the figures into ten faces, that is to say, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, in the following manner :—

"From the crown of the head to the forehead is the third part of a face. The face begins at the root of the lowest hairs which are upon the forehead, and ends at the bottom of the chin. The face is divided into three proportionable parts; the first contains the forehead, the second the nose, and the third the mouth and the chin; from the chin, to the pit betwixt the collar-bones, are two lengths of a nose.

"From the pit, betwixt the collar-bones, to the bottom of the breast, one face. From the bottom of the breast to the navel, one face.

"From the navel to the genitories, one face.

"From the genitories to the upper part of the knee, two faces.

"The knee contains half a face.

"From the lower part of the knee to the ankle, two faces.

"From the ankle to the sole of the foot, half a face.

"A man, when his arms are stretched out, is, from the longest finger of his right hand, to the longest of his left, as broad as he is long.

"From one side of the breasts to the other, two faces.

"The bone of the arm called humerus, is the length of two faces from the shoulder to the elbow.

"From the end of the elbow to the root of the little finger, the bone called cubitus, with part of the hand, contains two faces.

"From the bix of the shoulder-blade to the pit betwixt the collar bones, one face.

"If you would be satisfied in the measure of breadth, from the extremity of one finger to the other, so that this breadth should be equal to the length of the body, you must observe, that the bixes of the elbows, with the humerus, and of the humerus with the shoulder-blade, bear the proportion of half a face, when the arms are stretched out.

"The sole of the foot is the sixth part of the figure.

"The hand is the length of a face.

"The thumb contains a nose.

"The inside of the arm, from the place the muscle disappears, which makes the breast, (called the pectoral muscle,) to the middle of the arm, four noses.

"From the middle of the arm to the beginning of the head, five noses.

"The longest toe is a nose long.

"The two utmost parts of the teats; and the pit betwixt the collar-bones of a woman, make an æquilateral triangle.

"For the breadth of the limbs no precise measure can be given, because the measures themselves are changeable, according to the quality of the persons, and according to the movement of the muscles."

PERSPECTIVE.

Fresnoy was not aware that he was arguing from the abuse of the art of perspective, the business of which is to represent objects as they appeared to the eye, or as they are delineated on a transparent plane placed between the spectator and the object.

The rules of perspective, as well as all other rules, may be injudiciously applied; and it must be acknowledged that a misapplication of them is but too frequently found even in the works of the most considerable artists.

It is not uncommon to see a figure on the foreground represented near twice the size of another which is supposed to be removed but a few feet behind it; this, though true according to rule, will appear monstrous. This error proceeds from placing the point of distance too near the point of sight, by which means the diminution of objects is so sudden, as to appear unnatural, unless you stand so near the picture as the point of distance requires, which would be too near for the eye to comprehend the whole picture; whereas, if the point of distance is removed so far as the spectator may be supposed to stand, in order to see commodiously, and take within his view the whole, the figures behind would then suffer under no such violent diminution.

COMPOSITION.

Nothing so much breaks in upon, and destroys this compactness, as that mode of composition which cuts in the middle the figures in the foreground, though it was frequently the practice of the greatest painters, even of the best age: Michael Angelo has it in the crucifixion of St. Peter; Raffaelle in the cartoon of the preaching of St. Paul; and Parmigianino often showed only the head and shoulders above the base of the picture. However, the more modern painters, notwithstanding such authorities, cannot be accused of having fallen into this error.

But, suppose we carry the reformation still farther, and that we do not suffer the sides of the picture to cut off any part of the figures, the composition would certainly be more round and compact within itself. All subjects, it is true, will not admit of this; however, we may safely recommend it, unless the circumstances are very particular, and such as are certain to produce some striking effect by the breach of so just a rule.

GENIUS.

Nothing in the art requires more attention and judgment, or more of that power of discrimination which may not improperly be called genius, than the steering between general ideas and individuality; for though the body of the work must certainly be composed by the first, in order to communicate a character of grandeur to the whole, yet a dash of the latter is sometimes necessary to give an interest. An individual model, copied with scrupulous exactness, makes a mean style, like the Dutch; and the neglect of an actual model, and the method of proceeding solely from idea, has a tendency to make the painter degenerate into a mannerist.

In order to keep the mind in repair, it is necessary to replace and refreshen those impressions of nature which are continually wearing away.

A circumstance mentioned in the life of Guido is

well worth the attention of artists. He was asked from whence he borrowed his idea of beauty, which is acknowledged superior to that of any other painter; he said he would show all the models he used, and ordered a common porter to sit before him, from whom he drew a beautiful countenance. This was undoubtedly an exaggeration of his conduct; but his intention was to show that he thought it necessary for painters to have some model of nature before them, however they might deviate from it, and correct it from the idea of perfect beauty which they have formed in their minds.

In painting it is far better to have a model even to depart from, than to have nothing fixed and certain to determine the idea.

When there is a model, there is something to proceed on, something to be corrected; so that even supposing no part is adopted, the model has still been not without use.

Such habits of intercourse with nature, will, at least, create that variety which will prevent any one from prognosticating, on being informed of the subject, what manner of work the painter is likely to produce, which is the most disagreeable character an artist can have.

SINGLE FIGURES.

When the picture consists of a single figure only, that figure must be contrasted in its limbs and dra-

pery with great variety of lines; it should be as much as possible a composition of itself. It may be remarked, that such a complete figure will never unite or make part of a group; as, on the other hand no figure of a well-conducted group will stand by itself.

A composition, where every figure is such as I suppose a single figure ought to be, and those likewise contrasted to each other, which is not uncommon in the works of young artists, produces such an assemblage of artifice and affectation as is in the highest degree unnatural and disgustful.

There is another circumstance which, though not improper in single figures, ought never to be practised in historical pictures; that of representing any figure as looking out of the picture, that is, looking at the person who views the picture. This conduct in history gives an appearance to that figure of having no connection with the rest; and ought, therefore, never to be practised except in ludicrous subjects.

It is not certain that the variety recommended in a single figure, can, with equal success, be extended to colouring. The difficulty will be in diffusing the colours of the drapery of this single figure to other distant parts of the picture, for this is what harmony requires; this difficulty, however, seems to be evaded in the works of Titian, Vandyck, and

many others, by dressing their single figures in black or white.

Vandyck, in the famous portrait of Cardinal Bentivoglio, was confined in his dress to crimson velvet and white linen; he has, therefore, made the curtain in the background of the same crimson colour, and the white is diffused by a letter which lies on the table; and a bunch of flowers is likewise introduced for the same purpose.

PARTS OF A PICTURE.

Every part which goes to the composition of a picture, even inanimate objects, are capable, to a certain degree, of conveying sentiment, and contribute their share to the general purpose of striking the imagination of the spectator. The disposition of light, or the folding of drapery, will give, sometimes, a general air of grandeur to the whole work.

THE PASSIONS.

A painter, whatever he may feel, will not be able to express it on canvass, without having recourse to a recollection of those principles by which the passion required is expressed. The mind thus occupied, is not likely, at the same time, to be possessed with the passion which he is representing.

An image may be ludicrous, and in its first conception make the painter laugh, as well as the spec-

tator; but the difficulty of his art makes the painter, in the course of his work, equally grave and serious, whether he is employed on the most ludicrous, or the most solemn subject.

However, we may, without great violence, suppose this rule to mean no more than that a sensibility is required in the artist, so that he should be capable of conceiving the passion properly before he sets about reprinting it on canvass.

GLAZING OR SCRUMBLING.

From the various ancient paintings which have come down to us, we may form a judgment with tolerable accuracy of the excellencies and the defects of the art amongst the ancients. There can be no doubt, but that the same correctness of design was required from the painter as from the sculptor; and if what has happened in regard to their paintings, and we had the good fortune to possess what the ancients themselves esteemeed their masterpieces, I have no doubt but we should find their figures as correctly drawn as the Laocoon, and probably coloured like Titian. What disposes me to think higher of their colouring than any remains of ancient painting will warrant, is the account which Pliny gives of the mode of operation used by Apelles; that over his finished picture he spread a transparent liquid like ink, of which the effect was to give brilliancy, and at the same time to lower

the two great glare of the colour. This custom, or mode of operation, implies, at least, a true taste of that in which the excellence of colouring consists; which does not proceed from fine colours, but true colours; from breaking down these fine colours, which would appear too raw, to a deep toned brightness. Perhaps the manner in which Correggio practised the art of glazing was still more like that of Apelles, which was only perceptible to those who looked close to the picture, *ad manum intuenti demuna appareret;* whereas, in Titian, and still more in Bassan, and others, his imitators, it was apparent on the slightest inspection. Artists, who may not approve of glazing, must still acknowledge, that this practice is not that of ignorance.

Another circumstance, that tends to prejudice me in favour of their colouring, is the account we have of some of their principal painters using but four colours only. I am convinced the fewer the colours, the clearer will be the effect of those colours, and that four are sufficient to make every combination required. Two colours mixed together will not preserve the brightness of either of them single, nor will three be as bright as two; of this observation, simple as it is, an artist, who wishes to colour bright, will know the value. In regard to their power of giving peculiar expression, no correct judgment can be formed; but we cannot well sup-

pose that men who were capable of giving that general grandeur of character which so eminently distinguishes their works in sculpture, were incapable of expressing peculiar passions.

As to the enthusiastic commendations bestowed on them by their contemporaries, I consider them as no weight. The best words are always employed to praise the best works; admiration often proceeds from ignorance of higher excellence. What they appear to have most failed in is composition, both in regard to the grouping of their figures, and the art of disposing the light and shadow in masses. It is apparent that this, which makes so considerable a part of modern art, was to them totally unknown. If the great painters had possessed this excellence, some portion of it would have infallibly been diffused, and have been discoverable in the works of the inferior rank of artists, such as those whose works have come down to us, and which may be considered as on the same rank with the paintings that ornament our public gardens. Supposing our modern pictures of this rank only were preserved for the inspection of connoisseurs two thousand years hence, the general principles of composition would be still discoverable in those pieces; however feebly executed, there would be seen an attempt to a union of the figure with its ground, and some idea of disposing both the figures and the lights in groups.

Now as nothing of this appears in what we have of ancient painting, we may conclude that this part of the art was totally neglected, or more probably unknown. They might, however, have produced single figures which approached perfection, both in drawing and colouring; they might excel in a *solo*, (in the language of musicians,) though they were probably incapable of composing a full piece for a concert of different instruments.

MULTIPLICITY OF LIGHTS.

The same right judgment which proscribes two equal lights, forbids any two objects to be introduced of equal magnitude or force, so as to appear to be competitors for the attention of the spectator. This is common; but I do not think it quite so common to extend the rule so far as it ought to be extended. Even in colours, whether of the warm or cold kind, there should be one of each which should be apparently principal and predominant of the rest. It must be observed, even in drapery; two folds of the same drapery must not be of equal magnitude.

LIGHT AND SHADE.

The means by which the painter works, and on which the effect of his picture depends, are light and shade, warm and cold colours. That there is

an art in the management and disposition of those means will be easily granted; and it is equally certain, that this art is to be acquired by a careful examination of the works of those who have excelled in it.

I shall here set down the result of the observations which I have made on the works of those artists, who appear to have best understood the management of light and shade, and who may be considered as examples for imitation in this branch of the art.

Titian, Paul Veronese and Tintoret, were among the first painters who reduced to a system what was before practised without any fixed principle, and consequently neglected occasionally. From the Venetian painter, Rubens extracted his scheme of composition, which was soon understood and adopted by his countrymen, and extended even to the minor painters of familiar life in the Dutch school.

When I was at Venice, the method I took to avail myself of their principles was this. When I observed an extraordinary effect of light and shade in any picture, I took a leaf of my pocket-book, and darkened every part of it in the same gradation of light and shade as the picture, leaving the white paper untouched to represent the light, and this without any attention to the subject or the drawing of the figures. A few trials of this kind

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will be sufficient to give the method of their conduct in the management of their lights. After a few experiments, I found the paper blotted nearly alike. Their general practice appeared to be, to allow not above a quarter of the picture for the light, including in this portion both the principal and secondary lights, another quarter to be as dark as possible, and the remaining half kept in mezzotint or half shadow.

Rubens appears to have admitted rather more light than a quarter, and Rembrandt much less, scarce an eighth; by this conduct Rembrandt's light is extremely brilliant, but it costs too much—the rest of the picture is sacrificed to this one object. That light will certainly appear the brightest which is surrounded with the greatest quantity of shade, supposing equal skill in the artist.

By this means you may likewise remark the various forms and shapes of those lights, as well as the objects in which they are flung—whether a figure, or the sky, a white napkin, animals, or utensils, often introduced for this purpose only. It may be observed, likewise, what portion is strongly relieved, and how much is united with its ground; for it is necessary that some part, (though a small one is sufficient,) should be sharp and cutting against its ground, whether it be light on a dark, or dark on a light ground, in order to give firmness and distinctness to the work. If, on the other

hand, it is relieved on every side, it will appear as if inlaid on its ground. Such a blotted paper, held at a distance from the eye, will strike the spectator as something excellent for the disposition of light and shadow, though he does not distinguish whether it is a history, a portrait, a landscape, dead game, or any thing else; for the same principles extend to every branch of the art.

Whether I have given an exact account, or made a just division of the quantity of light admitted into the works of those painters, is of no very great consequence; let every person examine and judge for himself; it will be sufficient if I have suggested a mode of examining pictures this way, and one means at least of acquiring the principles on which they wrought.

HARMONY.

The same method may be used to acquire that harmonious effect of colours, which was recommended for the acquisition of light and shade—the adding colours to the darkened paper; but as those are not always at hand, it may be sufficient, if the picture which you think worthy of imitating be considered in this light, to ascertain the quantity of warm, and the quantity of cold colours.

The predominant colours of the picture ought to be of a warm, mellow kind, red or yellow; and no more cold colour should be introduced than will be

just enough to serve as a ground or foil, to set off and give value to the mellow colours, and never should itself be a principal. For this purpose a quarter of the picture will be sufficient. Those cold colours, whether blue, grey, or green, are to be dispersed about the ground or surrounding parts of the picture, whether it has the appearance of wanting such a foil, but sparingly employed in the masses of light.

I am confident that an habitual examination of the works of those painters who have excelled in harmony, will, by degrees, give a correctness of eye that will revolt at discordant colours, as a musician's ear revolts at discordant sounds.

BACKGROUNDS.

By a story told of Rubens, we have his authority for asserting, that to the effect of the picture the background is of the greatest consequence.

Rubens being desired to take under his instructions a young painter, the person who recommended him, in order to induce Rubens the more readily to take him, said, that he was already somewhat advanced in the art, and that he would be of immediate assistance in his backgrounds. Rubens smiled at his simplicity, and told him that if the youth was capable of painting his backgrounds, he stood in no need of his instructions; that the regulation and management of them re-

quired the most comprehensive knowledge of the art. This painters know to be no exaggerated account of a background, being fully apprised how much the effect of the picture depends upon it. It must be in union with the figure, so as not to have the appearance of being inlaid, like HOLBEIN's portraits, which are often on a bright green or blue ground. To prevent this effect, the ground must partake of the colour of the figure; or, as expressed in a subsequent line, receive all the treasures of the pallette. The background regulates likewise where and in what part the figure is to be relieved. When the form is beautiful, it is to be seen distinctly; when, on the contrary, it is uncouth or too angular, it may be lost in the ground. Sometimes a light is introduced, in order to join and extend the light on the figure, and the dark side of the figure is lost in a still darker background; for the fewer the outlines are which cut against the ground, the richer will be the effect, as the contrary produces what is called the dry manner.

One of the arts of supplying the defect of a scantiness of dress, by means of the background, may be observed in a whole length portrait by VANDYCK, which is in the cabinet of the Duke of Montagu. The dress of this figure would have had an ungraceful effect; he has, therefore, by means of a light background opposed to the light of the figure, and by the help of a curtain that catches the light

near the figure, made the effect of the whole together, full and rich to the eye.

THE MODES OF HARMONY.

All the modes of harmony, or of producing that effect of colours which is required in a picture, may be reduced to three, two of which belong to the grand style, and the other to the ornamental.

The first may be called the Roman manner, where the colours are of a full and strong body, such as are found in the Transfiguration; the next is that harmony which is produced by what the ancients called the *corruption* of the colours, by mixing and breaking them till there is a general union in the whole, without any thing that shall bring to your remembrance the painter's palette, or the original colours. This may be called the Bolognian style, and it is this hue and effect of colours which Lodovico Carraci seems to have endeavoured to produce, though he did not carry it to that perfection which we have seen since his time, in the small works of the Dutch school, particularly Jan Steen, where art is completely concealed, and the painter, like a great orator, never draws the attention from the subject on himself.

The last manner belongs properly to the ornamental style, which we call the Venetian, being first practised at Venice, but is perhaps better learned from Rubens. Here the brightest colours possible are admitted, with the two extremes of

warm and cold, and those reconciled by being dispersed over the picture, till the whole appears like a bunch of flowers.

As I have given instances from the Dutch school, where the art of breaking colour may be learned, we may recommend here an attention to the works of WATTEAU, for excellence in this florid style of painting. To all these different manners there are some general rules, that must never be neglected. First, that the same colour which makes the largest mass be diffused, and appear to revive in different parts of the picture; for a single colour will make a spot or blot. Even the dispersed flesh colour, which the faces and hands make, requires a principal mass, which is best produced by a naked figure; but where the subject will not allow of this, a drapery approaching to flesh colour will answer the purpose, as in the Transfiguration, where a woman is clothed in drapery of this colour, which makes a principal to all the heads and hands of the picture; and, for the sake of harmony, the colours, however distinguished in their light, should be nearly the same in their shadows, of a

——"Simple unity of shade,
As all were from one single palette spread;"

and to give the utmost force, strength and solidity to the work, some part of the picture should be as light and some as dark as possible; these two

extremes are then to be harmonized and reconciled to each other.

Instances where both of them are used may be observed in two pictures of Rubens, which are equally eminent for the force and brilliancy of their effect. One is in the cabinet of the Duke of Rutland, and the other in the chapel of Rubens, at Antwerp, which serves as his monument. In both these pictures he has introduced a female figure dressed in black satin, the shadows of which are as dark as pure black, opposed to the contrary extreme of brightness, can make them.

If to these different manners we add one more, that in which a silver-grey or pearly tint is predominant, I believe every kind of harmony that can be produced by colours will be comprehended. One of the greatest examples in this mode is the famous Marriage at Cana, in St. George's Church at Venice, where the sky, which makes a very considerable part of the picture, is of the brightest blue colour, and the clouds perfectly white; the rest of the picture is in the same key, wrought from this high pitch. We see likewise many pictures of Guido in this tint, and indeed those that are so are in his best manner. Female figures, angels and children were the subjects in which Guido more particularly succeeded; and to such the cleanness and neatness of this tint perfectly corresponds, and contributes not a little to that

exquisite beauty and delicacy which so much distinguishes his works. To see this style in perfection, we must again have recourse to the Dutch school, VANDERVELDE and the young TENIERS, whose pictures are valued by the connoisseurs in proportion as they possess this excellence of a silver tint. Which of these different styles ought to be preferred, so as to meet every man's idea, would be difficult to determine, from the predilection which every man has to that mode which is practised by the school in which he has been educated; but if any preeminence is to be given, it must be to that manner which stands in the highest estimation with mankind in general, and that is the Venitian, or rather the manner of Titian, which, simply considered as producing an effect of colours, will certainly eclipse with its splendour whatever is brought into competition with it. But, as I hinted before, if female delicacy and beauty be the principal object of the painter's aim, the purity and clearness of the tint of GUIDO will correspond better, and more contribute to produce it than even the glowing tint of TITIAN.

The rarity of excellence in any of these styles of colouring sufficiently shows the difficulty of succeeding in them. It may be worth the artist's attention, while he is in this pursuit, particularly to guard against those errors which seem to be annexed to or divided by their partitions from their

neighbouring excellence. Thus when he is endeavouring to acquire the Roman style, if he is not extremely careful, he falls into a hard and dry manner. The flowery colouring is nearly allied to the gaudy effect of fan painting. The simplicity of the Bolognian style requires the nicest hand to preserve it from insipidity. That of TITIAN, which may be called the golden manner, when unskilfully managed, becomes what the painters call foxy; and the silver degenerates into the leaden and heavy manner. None of them, to be perfect in their way, will bear any union with each other; if they are not distinctly separated the effect of the picture will be feeble and insipid, without any mark or distinguished character.

DARK SHADOWS.

IT is indeed a rule adopted by many painters, to admit in no part of the background, or on any object in the picture, shadows of equal strength with those which are employed on the principal figure; but this produces a false representation. With deference to our author, to have the strong light and shadow there alone is not to produce the best natural effect, nor is it authorized by the practice of those painters who are most distinguished for harmony of colouring; a conduct, therefore, totally contrary to this, is absolutely necessary, that

the same strength, the same tone of colour, should be diffused over the whole picture.

I am no enemy to dark shadows. The general deficiency to be observed in the works of the painters of the last age, as well as indeed of many of the present, is a feebleness of effect; they seem to be too much afraid of those *midnight* shadows, which alone give the power of nature, and without which a picture will appear like one wholly wanting solidity and strength. The lightest and gayest style requires this foil to give it force and brilliancy.

TASTE.

Taste will be unavoidably regulated by what is continually before the eyes. It were therefore well if young students could be debarred the sight of any works that were not free from gross faults, till they had well formed, and, as I may say, hardened their judgment. They might then be permitted to look about them, not only without fear of vitiating their taste, but even with advantage; and would often find great ingenuity and extraordinary invention in works which are under the influence of a bad taste.

FORM.

The first business of the student is to be able to give a true representation of whatever object presents itself, just as it appears to the eye, so as to

amount to a deception; and the geometric rules of perspective are included in this study. This is the language of the art, which appears the more necessary to be taught early, from the natural repugnance which the mind has to such mechanical labour, after it has acquired a relish for its higher departments.

The next step is to acquire a knowledge of the beauty of form. For this purpose he is recommended to the study of the Grecian sculpture; and for composition, colouring and expression, to the great works at Rome, Venice, Parma and Bologna. He begins now to look for those excellencies which address themselves to the imagination, and considers deception as a scaffolding to be now thrown aside, as of no importance to this finished fabric.

INVENTION.

The invention of a painter consists not only in inventing the subject, but in a capacity of forming in his imagination the subject in a manner best accommodated to his art, though wholly borrowed from poets, historians, or popular tradition. For this purpose he has full as much to do, and perhaps more, than if the very story was invented; for he is bound to follow the ideas which he has received, and to translate them (if I may use the expression) into another art. In this translation the painter's

invention lies; he must in a manner new cast the whole, and model it in his own imagination to make it a painter's nourishment;—it must pass through a painter's mind. Having received an idea of the pathetic and grand in *intellect*, he has next to consider how to make it correspond with what is touching and awful to the *eye*, which is a business by itself. But here begins what in the language of painters is called *Invention*, which includes not only the composition, or the putting the whole together, and the disposition of every individual part, but likewise the management of the background, the effect of light and shadow, and the attitude of every figure or animal that is introduced, or makes a part of the work.

Composition, which is the principal part of the invention of a painter, is by far the greatest difficulty he has to encounter. Every man that can paint at all, can execute individual parts; but to keep those parts in due subordination as relative to a whole, requires a comprehensive view of the art, that more strongly implies genius, than perhaps any other quality whatever.

SKETCHING.

> Then let the virgin canvas smooth expand,
> To claim the sketch and tempt the artist's hand.

I wish to understand the last line as recommending to the artist to paint the sketch previously on canvas, as was the practice with Rubens.

This method of painting the sketch, instead of merely drawing it on paper, will give a facility in the management of colours, and in the handling, which the Italian painters, not having this custom wanted; by habit, he will acquire equal readiness in doing two things at a time, as in doing only one. A painter should paint all his studies, and consider drawing only as a succedaneum, when colours are not at hand. This was the practice of the Venitian painters, and of all those who have excelled in colouring. The method of Rubens was to sketch his composition in colours, with all the parts more determined than sketches generally are; from this sketch, his scholars advanced the picture as far as they were capable; after which, he retouched the whole himself.

The painter's operation may be divived into three parts; the planning, which implies the sketch of the general composition; the transferring that design to the canvass; and the finishing or retouching the whole. If, for despatch, the artist looks out for assistance, it is in the middle stage only he can receive it; the first and last operation must be the work of his own hand.

SYMMETRY IN GROUPING.

Though the painter borrows his subject, he considers his art as not subservient to any other. His business is something more than assisting the histo-

rian with explanatory figures; as soon as he takes it into his hands, he adds, retouches, transposes, and moulds it anew, till it is made fit for his own art; he avails himself of the privileges allowed to poets and painters, and dares every thing to accomplish his ends, by means correspondent to that end, to impress the spectator with the same interest at the sight of his representation, as the poet has contrived to impress on the reader by his description: the end is the same in both cases, though the means are and must be different. Ideas different, to be conveyed to the mind by one sense, cannot always, with equal success, be conveyed by another.

Even the historian takes great liberties with facts, in order to interest his readers, and makes his narrative more delightful; much greater right has the painter to do this, who, though his work is called History-Painting, gives in reality a practical representation of events.

As it is necessary, for the sake of variety, that figures not only of different ages, but of different forms and characters, be introduced in a work where many figures are required, care must be taken that those different characters have a certain consonance of parts among themselves, such as is generally found in nature; a fat face, for instance, is usually accompanied with a proportional degree of corpulency of body; an aquiline nose for the most part, belongs to a thin countenance, with a

body and limbs corresponding to it; but these are observations which must occur to every body.

Yet there are others that are not so obvious; and those who have turned their thoughts this way, may form a probable conjecture concerning the form of the rest of the figure from a part, from the fingers, or from a single feature of the face; for instance, those who are born crook-backed, have commonly a peculiar form of lips and expression in the mouth, that strongly denotes that deformity.

FINISH.

The highest finishing is labour in vain, unless at the same time there be preserved a breadth of light and shadow; it is a quality, therefore, that is more frequently recommended to students, and insisted upon, than any other whatever; and, perhaps, for this reason, because it is most apt to be neglected, the attention of the artist being so often entirely absorbed in the detail.

To illustrate this, we may have recourse to Titian's bunch of grapes, which we will suppose to be placed, so as to receive a broad light and shadow. Here, though each individual grape on the light side has its light and shadow, and reflection, yet altogether they make but one broad mass of light. The slightest sketch, therefore, where this breadth is preserved, will have a better effect, will have more the appearance of coming from a mas-

ter hand, that is, in other words, will have more the characteristic and *generale* of nature, than the most laborious finishing, when this breadth is lost or neglected.

THE OPINION OF OTHERS.

There are few spectators of a painter's work, learned or unlearned, who if they can be induced to speak their real sensations, would not be profitable to the artist. The only opinions of which no use can be made, are those of half learned connoisseurs, who have quitted nature and have not acquired art. That same sagacity which makes a man excel in his profession, must assist him in the proper use to be made of the judgment of the learned, and the opinions of the vulgar. Of many things, the vulgar are as competent judges as the most learned connoisseur; of the portrait, for instance, of an animal; or, perhaps, of the truth of the representations of some vulgar passion. It must be expected, that the untaught vulgar will carry with them the same want of right taste in the judgment they make of the effect or character in a picture as they do in life, and prefer a strutting figure and gaudy colours to the grandeur of simplicity; but if this same vulgar person, or even an infant, should mistake for dirt what was intended to be a shade, it might be apprehended that the shadow was not the true colour of nature, with

almost as much certainty as if the observation had been made by the most able connoisseur.

PRACTICE.

However admirable his taste may be, he is but half a painter who can only conceive his subjects, and is without knowledge of the mechanical part of his art; as on the other hand, his skill may be said to be thrown away, who has employed his colours on subjects that create no interest from their beauty, their character, or expression. One part often absorbs the whole mind to the neglect of the rest: the young student whilst at Rome, studying the works of Michael Angelo and Raffaelle, are apt to lose all relish for any kind of excellence, except what is found in their works. Perhaps going afterwards to Venice, they may be induced to think there are other things required, and that nothing but the most superlative excellence in design, character, and dignity of style, can atone for a deficiency in the ornamental graces of the art. Excellence must of course be rare; and one of the causes of its rarity, is the necessity of uniting qualities which in their nature are contrary to each other; and yet no approaches can be made towards perfection without it. Every art or profession requires this union of contrary qualities, like the harmony of colouring, which is produced by an opposition of hot and cold hues.

The poet and the painter must unite to the warmth that accompanies a poetical imagination, patience and perseverance, the one in counting syllables and toiling for a rhyme, and the other in labouring the minute parts, and finishing the detail of his works, in order to produce the great effect he desires; they must both possess a comprehensive mind that takes in the whole at one view, and at the same time an accuracy of eye or mind that distinguishes between two things, that to an ordinary spectator appear the same, whether this consists in tints or words, or the nice discrimination in which expression and elegance depends.

PREJUDICE.

Prejudice is generally used in a bad sense, to imply a predilection, not founded on reason or nature, in favour of a particular master, or a particular manner, and therefore ought to be opposed with all our force; but totally to eradicate in advanced age what has so much assisted us in our youth, is a point to which we cannot hope to arrive. The difficulty of conquering this prejudice is to be considered in the number of those causes which makes excellence so very rare.

Whoever would make a rapid progress in any art or science, must begin by having great confidence in, and even prejudice in favour of his instructions; but to continue to think him infallible,

would be continuing for ever in a state of infancy. It is impossible to draw a line, where the artist shall begin to dare to examine and criticise the works of his master, or of the greatest master-pieces of art; we can only say, that his progress to this capacity will be gradual. In proportion as the scholar learns to analyze the excellence of the masters, he esteems, in proportion as he comes *exactly* to distinguish in what that excellence consists, and refer it to some precise rule and fixed standard; in that proportion, he becomes free. When he has once laid hold of their *principle*, he will see when they deviate from it, or fail to come up to it; so that it is in reality through his extreme admiration of, and blind deference to these masters, (without which he never would have employed an intense application to discover the rule and scheme of their works,) that he is enabled, if I may use the expression, to emancipate himself even to get above them, and to become the judge of those of whom he was at first the humble disciple.

In heroic subjects it will not, I hope, appear too great a refinement of criticism to say, that the want of naturalness or deception of the act, which gives to an inferior style its whole value, is no material disadvantage; the hours, for instance, as represented by Julio Romano, giving provender to the horses of the sun, would not strike the imagination more forcibly from their being coloured

with the pencil of Rubens, though he would have represented them more naturally; but might he not possibly, by that very act, have brought them down from the celestial state to the rank of mere terrestrial animals? In these things, however, I admit there will always be a degree of uncertainty. Who knows that Julio Romano, if he had possessed the art and practice of colouring like Rubens, would not have given to it some taste of poetical grandeur not yet attained to?

The same familiar naturalness would be equally an imperfection in characters which are to be represented as demi-gods, or something above humanity.

Though it would be far from an addition to the merit of those two great painters to have made their works deceptions; yet there can be no reason why they might not, in some degree, and with a judicious caution and selection, have availed themselves of many excellencies which are found in the Venitian, Flemish, and even Dutch Schools, and which have been inculcated in this poem. There are some of them which are not in absolute contradiction to any style; the happy disposition, for instance, of light and shade; the preservation of breadth in the masses of colours; the union of these with their grounds; and the harmony arising from a due mixture of hot and cold hues, with many other excellencies, not inseparably connected with

that individuality which produces deception, would surely not counteract the effect of the grand style; they would only contribute to the case of the spectator, by making the vehicle pleasing by which ideas are conveyed to the mind, which otherwise might be perplexed and bewildered with a confused assemblage of objects; they would add a certain degree of grace and sweetness to thought and grandeur. Though the merits of those two great painters are of such transcendency as to make us overlook their deficiency, yet a subdued attention to these inferior excellencies must be added to complete the idea of a perfect painter.

Deception, which is often recommended by writers on the theory of painting, instead of advancing the art, is in reality carrying it back to its infant state; the first essays of painting were certainly nothing but mere imitation of individual objects, and when this amounted to a deception, the artist had accomplished his purpose.

And here I must observe, that the arts of painting and poetry seem to have no kind of resemblance in their early stages. The first, or at least the second stage of poetry in every nation, is removed as far as possible from common life; every thing is of the marvellous kind; it treats only of heroes, wars, ghosts, enchantments, and transformations. The poet could not expect to seize and captivate the attention, if he related only common occur-

rences, such as every day produces. Whereas, the painter exhibited what then appeared a great effort of art, by merely giving the appearance of relief to a flat superficies, however uninteresting in itself that object might be; but this soon satiating, the same entertainment was required from painting, which had been experienced in poetry. The mind and imagination were to be satisfied, and required to be amused and delighted, as well as the eye; and when the art proceeded to a still higher degree of excellence, it was then found that this deception not only did not assist, but even in a certain degree counteracted the flight of imagination; hence proceeded the Roman school; and it is from hence that Raffaelle, Michael Angelo, and Julio Romano stand in that prominence of rank in which Fresnoy has justly placed them.

NATURE.

Nature is in reality the beginning and the end of theory. It is in nature only we can find that beauty which is the great object of our search; it can be found nowhere else; we can no more form any idea of beauty superior to nature, than we can form an idea of a sixth sense, or any other excellence out of the limits of the human mind. We are forced to confine our conception even of heaven itself and its inhabitants to what we see in this world; even the Supreme Being, if he is repre-

sented at all, the painter has no other way of representing, than by reversing the decree of the inspired lawgiver, and making God after his own image.

Nothing can be so unphilosophical, as a supposition that we can form any idea of beauty or excellence out of or beyond nature, which is and must be the fountain-head, from whence all our ideas must be derived.

This being acknowledged, it must follow, of course, that all the rules which this theory, or any other, teaches, can be no more than teaching the art of *seeing* nature.

The rules of art are formed on the various works of those who have studied nature the most successfully; by this advantage, of observing the various manners in which various minds have contemplated her works, the artist enlarges his own views, and is taught to look for and see what otherwise would have escaped his observation.

It is to be remarked, that there are two modes of imitating nature, one of which refers for its truth to the sensations of the mind, and the other to the eye.

Some schools, such as the Roman and Florentine, appear to have addressed themselves principally to the mind; others solely to the eye, such as the Venitian in the instances of PAUL VERONESE and TINTORET; others again have endeavoured to

unite both, by joining the elegance and grace of ornament with the strength and vigour of design—such are the schools of Bologna and Parma.

All those schools are equally to be considered as followers of nature. He who produces a work analogous to the mind or imagination of man, is as natural a painter as he whose works are calculated to delight the eye; the works of Michael Angelo or Julio Romano, in this sense, may be said to be as natural as those of the Dutch painters. The study, therefore, of the nature or affections of the mind is as necessary to the theory of the higher department of the art, as the knowledge of what will be pleasing or offensive to the eye is to the lower style.

What relates to the mind or imagination, such as invention, character, expression, grace or grandeur, certainly cannot be taught by rules; little more can be done than pointing out where they are to be found. It is a part which belongs to general education, and will operate in proportion to the cultivation of the mind of the artist. The greater part of the rules in this work are, therefore, necessarily confined to what relates to the eye; and it may be remarked, that none of those rules make any pretensions towards improving nature, or going contrary to her work; their tendency is merely to show what is truly nature.

Thus, for instance, a flowing outline is recom-

mended, because beauty, (which alone is nature,) cannot be produced without it. Old age or leanness produces straight lines, corpulency round lines; but in a state of health, accompanying youth, the outlines are waving, flowing and serpentine. Thus again, if we are told to avoid the chalk, the brick or leaden colour, it is because real flesh never partakes of those hues, though ill-coloured pictures are always inclinable to one or other of those defects.

Rules are to be considered likewise as fences, placed only where trespass is expected, and are particularly enforced in proportion as peculiar faults or defects are prevalent at the time or age in which they are delivered; for what may be proper strongly to recommend or enforce in one age, may not with equal propriety be so much laboured in another, when it may be the fashion for artists to run into the contrary extreme, proceeding from prejudice to a manner adopted by some favourite painter then in vogue.

When it is recommended to preserve a breadth of colour or light, it is not intended that the artist is to work broader than nature; but this lesson is insisted on because we know, from experience, that the contrary is a fault which artists are apt to be guilty of, who, when they are examining and finishing the detail, neglect or forget that breadth

which is observable only when the eye takes in the effect of the whole.

Thus again, we recommend to paint soft and tender, to make a harmony and union of colouring; and for this end, that all the shadows shall be nearly of the same colour. The reason of these precepts being at all enforced, proceeds from the disposition which artists have to paint harder than nature, to make the outline more cutting against the ground, and to have less harmony and union than is found in nature, preserving the same brightness of colour in the shadows as are seen in the lights; both these false manners of representing nature were the practice of the painters when the art was in its infancy, and would be the practice now of every student who was left to himself, and had never been taught the art of seeing nature. There are other rules which may be said not so much to relate to the objects represented as to the eye; but the truth of these are as much fixed in nature as the others, and proceed from the necessity there is that the work should be seen with ease and satisfaction; to this end are all the rules that relate to grouping, and the disposition of light and shade.

With regard to precepts about *moderation* and avoiding extremes, little is to be drawn from them. The rule would be too minute that had any exactness at all; a multiplicity of exceptions would arise,

so that the teacher would be for ever saying too much, and yet never enough. When a student is instructed to mark with precision every part of his figure, whether it be naked or in drapery, he probably becomes hard; if, on the contrary, he is told to paint in the most tender manner, possibly he becomes insipid. But among extremes some are more tolerable than others; of the two extremes I have just mentioned, the hard manner is the most pardonable—carrying with it an air of learning, as if the artist knew with precision the true form of nature, though he had rendered it with too heavy a hand.

In every part of the human figure, when not spoiled by two great corpulency, will be found this distinctness, the parts never appearing uncertain or confused, or, as a musician would say, slurred, and all those smaller parts, which are comprehended in the larger compartment, are still to be there, however tenderly marked.

To conclude, in all minute, detailed and practical excellence, *general* precepts must be either deficient or unnecessary; for the rule is not known, nor is it indeed to any purpose a rule, if it be necessary to inculcate it on every occasion.

THE ART OF PAINTING.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF DU FRESNOY.

True Poetry the Painter's power displays;
True Painting emulates the Poet's lays;
The rival sisters, fond of equal fame,
Alternate change their office and their name;
Bid silent Poetry the canvas warm,
The tuneful page with speaking picture charm.
What to the ear sublimer rapture brings,
That strain alone the genuine Poet sings;
That form alone where glows peculiar grace,
The genuine Painter condescends to trace:
No sordid theme will verse or paint admit,
Unworthy colours, if unworthy wit.

* * * * * * *

'Tis Painting's first chief business to explore,
What lovelier forms in Nature's boundless store
Are best to art and ancient taste allied,
For ancient taste those forms has best applied.
Till this be learn'd, how all things disagree!
How all one wretched, blind barbarity!
The fool to native ignorance confin'd,
No beauty beaming on his clouded mind;
Untaught to relish, yet too proud to learn,
He scorns the grace his dulness can't discern.
Hence reason to caprice resigns the stage,
And hence that maxim of the ancient Sage,
"Of all vain fools with coxcomb talents curst,
"Bad Painters and bad Poets are the worst."
When first the orient rays of beauty move
The conscious soul, they light the lamp of love;
Love wakes those warm desires that prompt our chace,
To follow and to fix each flying grace:
But earth-born graces sparingly impart
The symmetry supreme of perfect art:
For tho' our casual glance may sometimes meet

With charms that strike the soul, and seem complete,
Yet if those charms too closely we define,
Content to copy nature line for line,
Our end is lost. Not such the Master's care,
Curious he culls the perfect from the fair;
Judge of his art, thro' beauty's realm he flies,
Selects, combines, improves, diversifies;
With nimble step pursues the fleeting throng,
And clasps each Venus as she glides along.
Yet some there are who indiscreetly stray,
Where purblind practice only points the way;
Who every theoretic truth disdain,
And blunder on mechanically vain.
Some too there are, within whose languid breasts
A lifeless heap of embryo knowledge rests,
When nor the pencil feels their drowsy art,
Nor the skill'd hand explains the meaning heart.
In chains of sloth such talents droop confin'd:
'Twas not by words Apelles charm'd mankind.
Hear then the Muse; tho' perfect beauty towers
Above the reach of her descriptive powers,
Yet will she strive some leading rules to draw
From sovereign Nature's universal law;
Stretch her wide view o'er ancient Art's domain,
Again establish Reason's legal reign,
Genius again correct with science sage,
And curb luxuriant fancy's headlong rage.
"Right ever reigns its stated bounds between,
"And taste, like morals, loves the golden mean."
Some lofty theme let judgment first supply,
Supremely fraught with grace and majesty;
For fancy copious, free to every charm
That lines can circumscribe or colours warm;
Still happier, if that artful theme dispense
A poignant moral and instructive sense.
Then let the virgin canvas smooth expand,
To claim the sketch and tempt the Artist's hand:
Then, bold INVENTION, all the powers diffuse,
Of all thy sisters thou the noblest Muse:
Thee every art, thee every grace inspires,
Thee Phœbus fills with all his brightest fires.
Choose such judicious force of shade and light
As suits the theme, and satisfies the sight;

Weigh part with part, and with prophetic eye
The future power of all thy tints descry;
And those, those only on the canvas place,
Whose hues are social, whose effect is grace.
Vivid and faithful to the historic page,
Express the customs, manners, forms, and age;
Nor paint conspicuous on the foremost plain
Whate'er is false, impertinent, or vain;
But like the Tragic Muse, thy lustre throw,
Where the chief action claims its warmest glow.
This rare, this arduous task no rules can teach,
No skill'd preceptor point, no practice reach;
'Tis taste, 'tis genius, 'tis the heav'nly ray
Prometheus ravish'd from the car of day.

* * * * * * *

Learn then from Greece, ye youths, Proportion's law,
Inform'd by her, each just POSITION draw;
Skilful to range each large unequal part,
With varied motion and contrasted art;
Full in the front the nobler limbs to place,
And poise each figure on its central base.
But chief from her that flowing outline take,
Which floats, in wavy windings, like the snake,
Or lambent flame; which, ample, broad and long,
Reliev'd not swell'd, at once both light and strong,
Glides thro' the graceful whole. Her art divine
Cuts not, in parts minute, the tame design,
But by a few bold strokes, distinct and free,
Calls forth the charms of perfect symmetry.
True to anatomy, more true to grace,
She bids each muscle know its native place;
Bids small from great in just gradation rise,
And, at one visual point, approach the eyes.
Yet deem not, youths, that perspective can give
Those charms complete by which your works shall live:
What tho' her rules may to your hand impart
A quick mechanic substitute for art,
Yet formal, geometric shapes she draws;
Hence the true Genius scorns her rigid laws;
By Nature taught he strikes th' unerring lines,
Consults his eye, and as he sees designs.
Man's changeful race, the sport of chance and time,
Varies no less in aspect than in clime;

Mark well the difference, and let each be seen
Of various age, complexion, hair, and mien.
Yet to each separate form adapt with care
Such limbs, such robes, such attitude and air,
As best befit the head, and best combine
To make one whole, one uniform design:
Learn action from the dumb; the dumb shall teach
How happiest to supply the want of speech.
Fair in the front, in all the blaze of light,
The Hero of thy piece shall meet the sight,
Supreme in beauty; lavish here thine art,
And bid him boldly from the canvas start:
While round that sov'reign form th' inferior train
In groups collected fill the pictur'd plain;
Fill, but not crowd; for oft some open space
Must part their ranks, and leave a vacant place,
Lest artlessly dispers'd the sever'd crew
At random rush on our bewilder'd view;
Or parts with parts, in thick confusion bound,
Spread a tumultuous chaos o'er the ground.
In every figur'd group the judging eye
Demands the charms of contrariety;
In forms, in attitudes, expects to trace
Distinct inflections, and contrasted grace,
Where art diversely leads each changeful line,
Opposes, breaks, divides the whole design:
Thus, when the rest in front their charms display
Let one with face averted turn away;
Shoulders oppose to breasts, and left to right,
With parts that meet and parts that shun the sight.
This rule in practice uniformly true
Extends alike to many forms or few,
Yet keep thro' all the piece a perfect poise:
If here in frequent troops the figures rise,
There let some object tower with equal pride;
And so arrange each correspondent side,
That, thro' the well-connected plan, appear
No cold vacuity, no desert drear.

* * * * * * *

The joints in each extreme distinctly treat,
Nor e'er conceal the outline of the feet:
The hands alike demand to be exprest
In half-shown figures rang'd behind the rest;

Nor can such forms with force or beauty shine,
Save when the head and hands in action join.
Each air constrain'd and forc'd, each gesture rude,
Whate'er contracts or cramps the attitude,
With scorn discard. When squares or angles join,
When flows in tedious parallel the line,
Acute, obtuse, whene'er the shapes appear,
Or take a formal geometric air,
These all displease, and the disgusted eye
Nauseates the tame and irksome symmetry.
Mark then our former rule; with contrast strong
And mode transverse the leading lines prolong;
For these in each design, if well exprest,
Give value, force, and lustre to the rest.
Nor yet to Nature such strict homage pay,
As not to quit when Genius leads the way;
Nor yet, tho' Genius all his succour sends,
Her mimic powers tho' ready memory lends,
Presume from Nature wholly to depart,
For Nature is the arbitress of art.
In Error's grove ten thousand thickets spread,
Ten thousand devious paths our steps mislead;
'Mid curves, that vary in perpetual twine,
Truth owns but one direct and perfect line.
Spread then her genuine charms o'er all the piece,
Sublime and perfect as they glow'd in Greece.
Those genuine charms to seize, with zeal explore
The vases, medals, statues, form'd of yore,
Relievos high that swell the column's stem,
Speak from the marble, sparkle from the gem:
Hence all-majestic on th' expanding soul,
In copious tide the bright ideas roll;
Fill it with radiant forms unknown before,
Forms such as demigods and heroes wore:
Here pause and pity our enervate days,
Hopeless to rival their transcendent praise.
Peculiar toil on single forms bestow,
There let expression lend its finished glow;
There each variety of tint unite
With the full harmony of shade and light.
Free o'er the limbs the flowing vesture cast,
The light broad folds with grace majestic placed;
And as each figure turns a different way,

Give the large plaits their corresponding play;
Yet devious oft and swelling from the part,
The flowing robe with ease should seem to start;
Not on the form in stiff adhesion laid,
But well reliev'd by gentle light and shade.
Where'er a flat vacuity is seen,
There let some shadowy bending intervene,
Above, below, to lead its varied line,
As best may teach the distant folds to join;
And as the limbs by few bold strokes exprest
Excel in beauty, so the liberal vest
In large, distinct, unwrinkled folds should fly;
Beauty's best handmaid is Simplicity.
To diff'rent ranks adapt their proper robe;
With ample pall let monarchs sweep the globe;
In garb succinct and coarse array the swain;
In light and silken veils the virgin train.
Where in black shade the deeper hollow lies,
Assisting art some midway fold supplies,
That gently meets the light, and gently spreads
To break the hardness of opposing shades.
Each nobler symbol classic Sages use,
To mark a virtue, or adorn a Muse,
Ensigns of war, of peace, or rites divine.
These in thy work with dignity may shine:
But sparingly thy earth-born stores unfold,
Nor load with gems, nor lace with tawdry gold;
Rare things alone are dear in custom's eye,
They lose their value as they multiply.
Of absent forms the features to define,
Prepare a model to direct thy line;
Each garb, each custom, with precision trace,
Unite in strict decorum time with place;
And emulous alone of genuine fame,
Be Grace, be Majesty thy constant aim,
That Majesty, that Grace so rarely given
To mortal man, nor taught by art but Heaven.
In all to sage propriety attend,
Nor sink the clouds, nor bid the waves ascend;
Lift not the mansions drear of Hell or Night
Above the Thunderer's lofty arch of light;
Nor build the column on an osier base;
But let each object know its native place.

Thy last, thy noblest task remains untold,
Passion to paint, and sentiment unfold;
Yet how these motions of the mind display!
Can colours catch them, or can lines portray?
Who shall our pigmy pencils arm with might
To seize the Soul, and force her into sight?
Jove, Jove alone; his highly-favour'd few
Alone can call such miracles to view.
But this to rhet'ric and the schools I leave,
Content from ancient lore one rule to give:
" By tedious toil no passions are exprest,
" His hand who feels them strongest paints them best."
* * * * * * *
Return fair COLOURING! all thy lures prepare,
Each safe deception, every honest snare,
Which brings new lovers to thy sister's train,
Skilful at once to charm, and to retain;
Come, faithful Siren! chaste seducer! say,
What laws control thee, and what powers obey?
Know first, that light displays and shade destroys
Refulgent Nature's variegated dyes.
Thus bodies near the light distinctly shine
With rays direct, and as it fades decline.
Thus to the eye oppos'd with stronger light
They meet its orb, for distance dims the sight.
Learn hence to paint the parts that meet the view
In spheric forms, of bright and equal hue;
While, from the light receding or the eye,
The sinking outlines take a fainter dye.
Lost and confus'd progressively they fade,
Not fall precipitate from light to shade.
This Nature dictates, and this Taste pursues,
Studious in gradual gloom her lights to lose;
The various whole with soft'ning tints to fill,
As if one single head employ'd her skill.
Thus if bold fancy plan some proud design,
Where many various groups divide or join,
(Tho' sure from more than there confusion springs,)
One globe of light and shade o'er all she flings;
Yet skill'd the separate masses to dispose,
Where'er, in front, the fuller radiance glows,
Behind, a calm reposing gloom she spreads,
Relieving shades with light, and light with shades.

And as the centre of some convex glass,
Draws to a point the congregated mass
Of dazzling rays, that, more than nature bright,
Reflect each image in an orb of light,
While from that point the scatter'd beams retire,
Sink to the verge, and there in shade expire;
So strongly near, so softly distant throw
On all thy rounded groups the circling glow.
As is the Sculptor's, such the Painter's aim,
Their labour different, but their end the same;
What from the marble the rude chisel breaks,
The softer pencil from the canvas takes:
And, skill'd remoter distances to keep,
Surrounds the outline pale in shadows deep;
While on the front the sparkling lustre plays,
And meets the eye in full meridian blaze.
True Colouring thus in plastic power excels,
Fair to the visual point her forms she swells,
And lifts them from their flat aerial ground
Warm as the life, and as the statue round.
In silver clouds in ether's blue domain,
Or the clear mirror of the watry plain,
If chance some solid substance claim a place,
Firm and opaque amid the lucid space,
Rough let it swell and boldly meet the sight,
Mark'd with peculiar strength of shade and light;
There blend each earthly tint of heaviest sort,
At once to give consistence and support,
While the bright wave, soft cloud, or azure sky,
Light and pellucid from that substance fly.
Permit not two conspicuous lights to shine
With rival radiance in the same design;
But yield to one alone the power to blaze
And spread th' extensive vigour of its rays,
There where the noblest figures are display'd;
Thence gild the distant parts, and lessening fade:
As fade the beams which Phœbus from the East
Flings vivid forth to light the distant West,
Gradual those vivid beams forget to shine,
So gradual let thy pictur'd lights decline.
The sculptor'd forms which some proud Circus grace,
In Parian marble or Corinthian brass,
Illumin'd thus, give to the gazing eye

Th' expressive head in radiant Majesty,
While to each lower limb the fainter ray
Lends only light to mark, but not display:
So let thy pencil fling its beams around,
Nor e'er with darker shades their force confound.
For shades too dark dissever'd shapes will give,
And sink the parts their softness would relieve;
Then only well reliev'd, when like a veil
Round the full lights the wand'ring shadows steal;
Then only justly spread, when to the sight
A breadth of shade pursues a breadth of light.
This charm to give, great Titian wisely made
The cluster'd grapes his rule of light and shade.
White, when it shines with unstain'd lustre clear,
May bear an object back, or bring it near;
Aided by black it to the front aspires,
That aid withdrawn it distantly retires;
But black unmix'd, of darkest midnight hue,
Still calls each object nearer to the view.
Whate'er we spy thro' colour'd light or air,
A stain congenial on their surface bear,
While neighb'ring forms by joint reflection give
And mutual take the dyes that they receive.
But where on both alike one equal light
Diffusive spreads, the blending tints unite.
For *breaking* colours thus (the ancient phrase
By Artists used) fair Venice claims our praise:
She, cautious to transgress so sage a rule,
Confin'd to soberest tints her learned school;
For tho' she lov'd by varied mode to join
Tumultuous crowds in one immense design,
Yet there we ne'er condemn such hostile hues
As cut the parts or glaringly confuse;
In tinsel trim no foppish form is drest.
Still flows in graceful unity the vest;
And o'er that vest a kindred mantle spreads,
Unvaried but by power of lights and shades,
Which mildly mixing, every social dye
Unites the whole in loveliest harmony.
When small the space, or pure the ambient air
Each form is seen in bright precision clear;
But if thick clouds that purity deface,
If far extend that intervening space,

There all confus'd the objects faintly rise,
As if prepar'd to vanish from our eyes.
Give them each foremost part a touch so bright,
That, o'er the rest, its domineering light
May much prevail; yet, relative in all,
Let greater parts advance before the small.
Minuter forms, when distantly we trace,
Are mingled all in one compacted mass;
Such the light leaves that clothe remoter woods,
And such the waves on wide-extended floods.
Let each contiguous part be firm allied,
Nor labour less the separate to divide;
Yet so divide that to th' approving eye
They both at small and pleasing distance lie.
Forbid too hostile colours close to meet,
And win with middle tints their union sweet;
Yet varying all thy tones, let some aspire
Fiercely in front, some tenderly retire.
Vain is the hope by colouring to display
The bright effulgence of the noon-tide ray,
Or paint the full-orb'd Ruler of the skies
With pencils dipp'd in dull terrestrial dyes:
But when mild Evening sheds her golden light;
When Morn appears array'd in modest white;
When soft suffusion of the vernal shower
Dims the pale sun; or, at the thund'ring hour,
When, wrapt in crimson clouds, he hides his head,
Then catch the glow and on the canvas spread.
Bodies of polish'd or transparent tone,
Of metal, crystal, iv'ry, wood, or stone;
And all whose rough unequal parts are rear'd
The shaggy fleece, thick fur, or bristly beard;
The liquid too; the sadly melting eye,
The well-comb'd locks that wave with glossy dye;
Plumage and silks; a floating form that take,
Fair Nature's mirror, the extended lake;
With what immers'd thro' its calm medium shines
By reflex light, or to its surface joins;
These first with thin and even shades portray,
Then, on their flatness strike th' enlivening ray,
Bright and disiinct,—and last, with strict review,
Restore to every form its outline true.
By mellowing skill thy ground at distance cast,

Free as the air, and transient as its blast;
There all thy liquid colours sweetly blend,
There all the treasures of thy palette spend,
And every form retiring to that ground
Of hue congenial to itself compound.
The hand that colours well, must colour bright;
Hope not that praise to gain by sickly white;
But amply heap in front each splendid dye,
Then thin and light withdraw them from the eye,
Mix'd with that simple unity of shade,
As all were from one single palette spread.
Much will the mirror teach, or evening gray,
When o'er some ample space her twilight ray
Obscurely gleams: hence art shall best perceive
On distant parts what fainter hues to give.
Whate'er the form which our first glance commands,
Whether in front or in profile he stands,
Whether he rule the group, or singly reign,
Or shine at distance on some ample plain,
On that high-finish'd form let Paint bestow
Her midnight shadow, her meridian glow.
The portrait claims from imitative art
Resemblance close in each minuter part,
And this to give, the ready hand and eye
With playful skill the kindred features ply;
From part to part alternately convey
The harmonizing gloom, the darting ray,
With tones so just, in such gradation thrown,
Adopting Nature owns the work her own.
Say, is the piece thy hand prepares to trace
Ordain'd for nearer sight, or narrow space?
Paint it of soft and amicable hue:
But, if predestin'd to remoter view,
Thy strong unequal varied colours blend;
And ample space to ample figures lend,
Where to broad lights the circumambient shade
In liquid play by labour just is laid;
Alike with liveliest touch the forms portray,
Where the dim window half excludes the day;
But, when expos'd in fuller light or air,
A brown and sober cast the group may bear.
Fly every foe to elegance and grace,
Each yawning hollow, each divided space;

Whate'er is trite, minute, abrupt, or dry,
Where light meets shade in flat equality;
Each theme fantastic, filthy, vile, or vain,
That gives the soul disgust, or senses pain;
Monsters of barbarous birth, Chimeras drear,
That pall with ugliness, or awe with fear.
And all that chaos of sharp broken parts,
Where reigns confusion, or whence discord starts.
Yet hear me, youths! while zealous ye forsake
Detected faults, this friendly caution take,—
Shun all excess; and with true wisdom deem,
That vice alike resides in each extreme.
Know, if supreme perfection be your aim,
If classic praise your pencil hope to claim,
Your noble outlines must be chaste, yet free,
Connected all with studied harmony;
Few in their parts, yet those distinct and great;
Your Colouring boldly strong, yet softly sweet.
Know, he that well begins has half achiev'd
His destin'd work. Yet late shall be retriev'd
That time mispent, that labour worse than lost,
The young disciple, to his dearest cost,
Gives to a dull preceptor's tame designs;
His tawdry colours, his erroneous lines,
Will to the soul that poison rank convey,
Which life's best length shall fail to purge away.
Yet let not your untutor'd childhood strive
Of Nature's living charms the sketch to give,
Till, skill'd her separate features to design,
You know each muscle's site, and how they join.
These while beneath some master's eye you trace,
Vers'd in the law of symmetry and grace,
Boldly proceed: his precepts shall impart
Each sweet deception of the pleasing art:
Still more than precept shall his practice teach,
And add what self-reflection ne'er can reach.
Oft, when alone, the studious hour employ
On what may aid your art, and what destroy:
Diversity of parts is sure to please,
If all the various parts unite with ease;
As surely charms that voluntary style,
Which careless plays, and seems to mock at toil:
For labour'd lines with cold exactness tire,

'Tis freedom only gives the force and fire
Ethereal; she, with alchymy divine,
Brightens each touch, ennobles every line;
Yet pains and practice only can bestow
This facile power of hand, whose liberal flow
With grateful fraud its own exertions veils:
He best employs his art who best conceals.
This to obtain, let taste with judgment join'd
The future whole infix upon thy mind;
Be there each line in truth ideal drawn,
Or ere a colour on the canvas dawn;
Then as the work proceeds, that work submit
To sight instinctive, not to doubting wit;
The eye each obvious error swift descries,
Hold then the compass only in the eyes.
Give to the dictates of the learn'd respect,
Nor proudly untaught sentiments reject,
Severe to self alone: for self is blind,
And deems each merit in its offspring join'd:
Such fond delusion time can best remove,
Concealing for a while the child we love;
By absence then the eye impartial grown,
Will, tho' no friend assist, each error own;
But these subdued, let thy determin'd mind
Veer not with every critic's veering wind,
Or e'er submit thy genius to the rules
Of prating fops, or self-important fools;
Enough if from the learn'd applause be won:
Who doat on random praises, merit none.
By Nature's sympathetic power, we see,
As is the parent, such the progeny:
Ev'n Artists, bound by their instinctive law,
In all their works their own resemblance draw:
Learn then "to know thyself;" that precept sage
Shall best allay luxuriant Fancy's rage;
Shall point how far indulgent Genius deigns
To aid her flight, and to what point restrains.
But as the blushing fruits, the breathing flowers,
Adorning Flora's and Pomona's bowers,
When forcing fires command their buds to swell,
Refuse their dulcet taste, their balmy smell;
So labour's vain extortion ne'er achieves
That grace supreme which willing Genius gives.

Thus tho' to pains and practice much we owe,
Tho' thence each line obtains its easy flow,
Yet let those pains, that practice, ne'er be join'd,
To blunt the native vigor of the mind.
When shines the morn, when in recruited course
The spirits flow, devote their active force
To every nicer part of thy design,
But pass no idle day without a line:
And wandering oft the crowded streets along,
The native gestures of the passing throng
Attentive mark; for many a casual grace,
Th' expressive lines of each impassion'd face
That bears its joys or sorrows undisguis'd,
May by observant taste be there surpris'd.
Thus, true to art, and zealous to excel,
Ponder on Nature's powers, and weigh them well;
Explore thro' earth and heaven, thro' sea and skies,
The accidental graces as they rise;
And while each present form the Fancy warms,
Swift on thy tablets fix its fleeting charms.

* * * * * * *

For paltry gold let pining Misers sigh,
His soul invokes a nobler Deity;
Smit with the glorious avarice of fame,
He claims no less than an immortal name;
Hence on his fancy just conception shines,
True judgment guides his hand, true taste refines;
Hence ceaseless toil, devotion to his art,
A docile temper, and a generous heart;
Docile, his sage preceptor to obey,
Generous, his aid with gratitude to pay;
Blest with the bloom of youth, the nerves of health,
And competence, a better boon than wealth.
Great blessings these! yet will not these empower
His tints to charm at every labouring hour:
All have their brilliant moments, when alone
They paint as if some star propitious shone.
Yet then, e'en then, the hand but ill conveys
The bolder grace that in the fancy plays:
Hence, candid Critics, this sad truth confest,
Accept what least is bad, and deem it best;
Lament the soul in error's thraldom held,
Compare life's span with art's extensive field;

Know that, ere perfect taste matures the mind,
Or perfect practice to that taste be join'd,
Comes age, comes sickness, comes contracting pain,
And chills the warmth of youth in every vein.
Rise then, ye youths, while yet that warmth inspires,
While yet nor years impair, nor labour tires,
While health, while strength are yours, while that mild ray
Which shone auspicious on your natal day,
Conducts you to Minerva's peaceful quire,—
Sons of her choice, and sharers of her fire,
Rise at the call of art: expand your breast,
Capacious to receive the mighty guest,
While, free from prejudice, your active eye
Preserves its first unsullied purity;
While new to beauty's charms, your eager soul
Drinks copious draughts of the delicious whole,
And Memory on her soft, yet lasting page,
Stamps the fresh image which shall charm thro' age.

* * * * * * *

Yet more than these to Meditation's eyes
Great Nature's self redundantly supplies:
Her presence, best of Models! is the source
Whence Genius draws augmented power and force;
Her precepts, best of teachers! give the powers,
Whence art, by practice to perfection soars.

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